

The Depth of Betrayal

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Summary: Things on Berk are tranquil, but when a large storm brings trouble to the shores of island, will a stranger be able to help save the vikings? Rated T, but is probably a T/M for language, lime, and later chapters will be VIOLENT. I beg that if you are squeamish, avoid the later chapters. OC.

1. Discovery

Hi guys and gals, this is my first fanfic attempt. I loved HTTYD and wanted to do something like fanfics, but never really had a place to put em up. So here is the first chapter of He who was There. The name may change depending on how the story develops. I apologize for this being a bit boring, but it'll pick up, I >promise.<p>

****I DON'T OWN ANYTHING, DREAMWORKS OWNS IT ALL****

* * *

><p>Hiccup woke up to a warm day on Berk, which was nice because warm days were scarce. The normal chill that gripped the island held tight for nine months a year, but for a few weeks, it became warm. This was usually the time when the majority of hunting was done, and also a time when people could really enjoy themselves. Even though, Thought Hiccup, _Vikings usually enjoy themselves by killing something._

He had already gone through his normal morning routine, rolling to the side of his bed to put on his metal foot and discovering that Toothless had once again stolen it. The following tussle was in all reality not a tussle, as it was Hiccup demanding his foot back for ten minutes before Toothless had his fill of morning fun.

"Son! You awake?" Stoick yelled up the stairs.

"Yeah, coming dad," Hiccup answered. He was well aware that his dad wanted to have a...shall we say...father son catch up and update day. Since the battle a year ago when he lost his leg, Hiccup and his father had not had much time at all to gather their thoughts and organize themselves together. The Haddock household had not been on the same page for a full year, and after today it would be. Hiccup was excited to spend a day with his father, due to the fact that before a year ago, Hiccup was the village screw up. He was a clear disgrace to his father, the Chief, and everyone made sure that he knew it.

Whether it took the form of taunts, or of straight verbal assault, everyone in the village had taken a shot at him during his years of one clumsy disaster after another. Even the five young vikings that he now considered his closest friends were among the worst offenders.

"Hurry up son! We want to get out of town before the buffoons start trouble that I have to fix!" Stoick yelled again.

Hiccup quickly finished getting dressed and proceeded down the stairs to where his father was waiting. There stood Stoick the Vast, the Chief of Berk, and Hiccups father. The giant man stood there holding two seemingly puny...nothings. "Dad, what are we going to do?" Hiccup asked, slightly worried that his father had no tools or implements with him.

Stoick clapped his son on the shoulder, "Well son, I decided that I would catch our meal today, but lets go. Is Toothless coming?" He asked with a glance at the loft. Hiccups father and Toothless had a mutually tense relationship, neither one particularly fond of the other, and mainly keeping away from each others throats through mutual respect. Toothless knew that Stoick was the best dragon killer, before the final battle, and Stoick knew that Toothless was by far the deadliest dragon out there. So, in lieu of a homicidal battle, the two of them respected each other and enjoyed the one thing they could both love, which was of course, Hiccup.

"I don't think so dad. I asked him to stay here for today and wait for me to come back," Hiccup answered.

Leaving the house, Hiccup breathed the crispy morning air and let it out in a whoosh. Life was going well for him recently. The village had not gone through any secular disasters in quite some time, Hiccups friends were all doing well training dragon riders, and his secret relationship with one Astrid Hofferson was blooming. Even though she had publicly kissed him once he woke from his battle with the Dragon Queen, they had done nothing else to suggest a relationship. They didn't even speak to each other any differently than before and the village opinion that the aggressive, strong and beautiful Astrid wouldn't have anything to do with Hiccup helped out greatly. Even the other young viking boys had resumed attempts at wooing her, which had been met with either solid refusal or a solid thrashing.

Life if good. Hiccup thought, sighing again. It was light outside, but it was still early morning so most of the villagers weren't up yet. Hiccup and his father walked at as brisk a pace as possible, considering Hiccups prosthetic, towards the forest and the lake that they would spend their time at. The warmth had obviously spread to

the woodland creatures, because the forest was alive with activity. Birds flew overhead in large flocks, elk ran joyfully through the trees, and even little animals such as squirrels were darting around.

Arriving at the lake, Hiccup and his father set up camp after Stoick pulled two logs over for them to sit on. Hiccup gathered firewood and set up a spit, ringing it with river stones from nearby. Hiccup had plenty of practice setting up fires, because while he was training Toothless after they met, Hiccup had been out in the woods nearly every day, and he had to cook for himself. Toothless still wasn't sure why Hiccup didn't like raw fish.

Soon, his father rumbled through the bushes, a dead elk slung over his shoulder like a child. Hiccup guffawed. His father still managed to surprise him even after all these years of living together. Stoick had brought no weapons with him on this trip, apart from a skinning knife, yet he had still managed to catch and kill an elk with his bare hands. Not bad for the man who took a dragons head off when he was a baby. "Is that fire ready yet?" his father called.

"Yeah dad! You can bring that elk over," Hiccup answered.

They spent the next hour or so laughing and telling stories of things happening in the village, how Gobber always needed new underpants, and how the dragons were affecting their lives. After the elk was done cooking, they tore into it, stuffing themselves with the warm meat.

"Well son, its time we got to the real reason that we're here," Stoick said, putting down the large flank steak he was chewing on. Hiccups eyes slanted as he listened. _The real reason? What did I do now?_ He thought.

"Well dad, sorry for whatever it is I'm in trouble for," Hiccup said roughly, shooting a wry smile at his dad.

"You didn't do anything wrong Hiccup. We have to talk about your future. I had already married your mother before I was your age. You need to start thinking about female partnership before all the lovely ones get scooped up." Stoick said, very seriously. Hiccup was speechless. He knew that intimacy was a glaring matter, but he wasn't prepared for his dad to come right out and basically say 'pick a woman and marry her'. It wouldn't work that way for Hiccup. He earned the love of his girlfriend through very, _very_ unorthodox methods. There had been no courting, no dates, no sharing of feelings for the most part. He had earned her through his actions, his staunch belief that breaking a seven generation tradition was the right thing to do. He risked everything to stop the homicidal lifestyle of the village, and he won.

_That's _what won him Astrid. Not being strong, not being beautiful, and not winning her with gifts. His character and mind were his strongest traits.

"Well dad, I understand that, but who on earth do _you _think would choose me? I'm not a lump of muscles, like Snotlout, nor am I a never ending flow of information, like Fishlegs. I don't know about Ruffnut and Tuffnut, but regardless! Who would pick Hiccup the Skinny, Weak, Clumsy and otherwise unappealing?" Hiccup wondered if his rant could

fool his father, and he was lucky.

"Look Hiccup, I know that you're at a disadvantage and all that, but I don't see a reason why you can't get a nice wife. I mean, the Hofferson girl gave you that kiss and all..." Stoick's eyes twinkled for a second, "Wait...Hiccup, what about Astrid? Doesn't she fancy you?" he asked.

_Crap, could he have found something to give me away? _"I wonder which god would be kind enough to make Astrid fancy me," Hiccup groaned. He hoped that his pity routine would work once again, as it had many times for him before. Once again, he was lucky.

"Alright I suppose I was getting a little hopeful. Don't rush it Hiccup, just find yourself someone who will make you happy," Stoick mumbled.

The rest of that day progressed without incident and, upon reflection, Hiccup thought it was in fact a great success. He and his father had some great conversations about the state of the village, the state of inter-village affairs, and even exchanged some ideas about large barns to house the dragons. Hiccup was on his way to Meade Hall for some food when he was stopped by his mentor Gobber, "Hiccup! Hold on there!" he called, drawing Hiccup's attention away from his thoughts.

"Hi Gobber." Hiccup said as the man hobbled closer. "Can you work late at the forge tonight? I have to do something...uh...personal." Gobber said, scratching his head a little.

"Yeah, that's fine Gobber. Actually, I'll head there right now." Hiccup said, welcoming the chance to be alone for a while.

Hiccup loved working his late nights at the forge, because it gave him time to think, and make up new gadgets and gizmo's to play with. Entering the smithy, he found it to be cold, a clear sign that Gobber had not been there for at least a few hours. Soon enough though, after firing up the furnaces, it was hot and sweltering inside, drawing Hiccup to remove his shirt. As he went to put his smith gloves on, he noticed both his arm and chest. Scars riddled his body, all over his chest and arms, stretching down to his hands. The one unfortunate thing about working in the hot conditions is that clothes become very uncomfortable. Once removed though, each spark, each slip of metal, even walking past tools could result in a gash, burn and ultimately anything could leave a scar that nobody knew of. Only Gobber and his father knew about Hiccup's scars from the forge, because he were the only people Hiccup trusted enough to tell. As this thought flew through his head, a new worry began to creep up on him.

Astrid.

The girl hated beyond all words to see Hiccup hurt, but before that topic even began, the question of why he had never shown or even told her about them would arise. Why hadn't he told her? Hiccup decided long ago that he wanted Astrid to sleep at night, instead of worrying about him and his forge work. She was beautiful, she was strong-willed, but when she worried about something, she REALLY worried about it. Several times Hiccup had woken in the middle of the night to find Astrid throwing tiny pebbles at his window, wanting his

comfort about something that was eating at her. Not minding this, Hiccup still believed that Astrid needed to sleep at night to maintain her energetic and active daily routine.

She, of all people, woke up as soon as the first shred of sunlight hit the water around Berk. She, of all people, was the one who had been training in the arena for five hours before anyone else even stirred. So, if she didn't sleep, then she was in a bad mood. When she was in a bad mood, the general populace ended up with bruises.

Astrid's temper was legendary, and people mostly avoided her when her temper flared, making calming her down a herculean task for him. Toothless always helped though, playfully kidnapping her in the middle of nowhere and taking her for a flight and, even when taken against her will, flying had grown to be one of Astrid's passions, and it soothed her fire quickly.

Tapping away at swords, shields, axes and other sorts of things Gobber had lined up for him, Hiccup's thoughts swirled about in his head, occupying his time nicely. His work on these various projects soon extended well into the night and early morning, the constant hammering forming a beat that Hiccup managed to time his strikes with. Soon though, his tired eyes began to catch up with him, so he stoked down the furnace and retired to his little office in the back. The cot there didn't have as many furs as his bed at home, but the low burning furnace gave more than enough heat for the forge to be comfortable.

* * *

><p>Astrid Hofferson's day began early. She hated the thought of wasting her time sleeping when she could be doing something useful. Rubbing the sleep out of her eyes, she quickly threw her clothes on, topped off by her token armored skirt and shoulder pads. After briefly stuffing herself with some cold mutton, she began her morning run. The run usually took her into the forest past the cove where she met Toothless, and to a coastline further down the island. She loved the forest in the morning, the crisp air, the quiet tranquility before the animals stirred for the day, the soft calls of early birds. It all reminded her how peaceful the village was right now. She slowed to a walk, enjoying the morning and picking different flowers to take home to her mother.<p>

Reaching the near coastline, she walked along the beach, feeling the spray of the ocean on her face when a roar brought her head to the sky, and she spotted her Deadly Nadder, Azure, flying overhead. Laughing, Astrid ran towards the dragon as she landed, stroking her chin and crest spikes. Azure, being A Nadder, was vain to a fault, and cared more about her appearance than even a princess would. Her daily preening would consume hours.

Ever since Hiccup had shown Berk that dragons could be friends instead of prey, things were much easier, and life changed. Hunting could now be done from the back of a dragon, which made it much faster, even if the dragon ate half the kill before you could get to it. Building became easier, travel became easier and everything just got simpler.

That's funny. I haven't seen Hiccup since before yesterday. She

thought. She hadn't seen him at dinner, and nor had she seen Gobber, which meant that Hiccup's night was probably spent at the forge. Which also meant that he was sleeping there.

Alone.

Smiling at the thought of them being together alone, Astrid got on Azure and they took off back towards the town. While on the way though, Astrid spied a massive, black cloud bank on the horizon. It looked like the run of good weather on Berk would come to an end in a windy fashion. Shaking off the thought, she hurried back to the village, hoping not too many people were up yet. To avoid unnecessary attention, she left Azure on the edges of town and walked in. Her dragon being outside the forge would sell her relationship with Hiccup out faster than a viking could yell "Fire!"

Pleased that only a couple people were out and about, and none who would be too interested in what she's doing, Astrid quickened her pace to the doors of the smithy. Quickly, she opened the door and slipped inside, elated to see that nothing was awake inside, and the furnace was burning low to warm the place. That was only done when Hiccup was sleeping there.

Padding quietly to his little back office, Astrid prepared herself to surprise him. Whipping back the curtain and grinning wildly, Astrid found...nothing. He wasn't in his cot, which was a surreal disappointment for her. _Where did he go? If the furnace is lit, someone should be here, and I can't smell Gobber, so it must be Hiccup._ She thought.

"Astrid?" Came the voice that she so loved to hear, "Hiccup! I knew you were here!"

She flung her arms around his neck and dragged him in for a kiss. After a few moments they broke the kiss but remained embraced in each others arms, "I missed you yesterday," Astrid said, her eyes twinkling.

"I missed you too. Sorry I wasn't at dinner, Gobber wanted me to work late," He answered, tussling her hair, a thing he gleefully enjoyed doing, and a thing that she wished he wouldn't do as much.

"So what brings you to the musty, nasty smelling forge?" Hiccup asked, moving towards the furnace to stoke it for the days work. "Well, I was just thinking about you and the dragons and all that, and I got lonely," she answered with mischievous glint in her eye, "When can we go to the forest and spend some time together?" She finished.

Hiccup thought for a moment, "Well, I'd say after that storm hits. The weather will be nasty for a few days, so I don't think it would be a good idea to head anywhere far from the village till its over."

Astrid wasn't pleased with that news, but it made sense to her. Getting caught in a storm while in the forest would be very unpleasant, for both them and those who came to fetch them. Oh well.

* * *

><p>Hiccup sat in the forge with Gobber, the twins, Fishlegs and Snotlout two days later. The storm had crashed upon Berk with a vengeance, the winds and driving rain causing heavy damages all over. The first night, there was a calm, in which it was decided that most of the teens would assemble in one place to act as a type of emergency crew if something bad happened. "Well this is damn boring," Snotlout complained loudly.<p>

"Well stop sitting there and actually do something useful," Gobber yelled at him as the viking rushed out to the outhouse.

"Yeah Snotty, stop being like my sister,"

"Shut up, idiot! I'm doing more than you are here!" Ruffnut retorted.

"Are not!"

"Are too!"

"Are not!"

"Are too!"

With the final words, Tuffnut dropped the basket he was holding and dove after his sister. They rolled around, grabbing, ripping and punching as they usually do. Hiccup sighed, watching them. He'd wanted Astrid to be here with them, but she had opted to stay home with her mother and little brother tonight. His father had most of the village go to Meade Hall to avoid the storm, but many decided to stay at home.

"I must say, ladies and gentleman, that this is one of the strongest storms I've ever seen," Gobber said as he trundled in from the outhouse.

"Its like idiot here pissed off the gods, as usual," Ruffnut scoffed, and the fight began anew.

Three days later, the storm broke. Mostly. It was still dreary and a bit rainy, but there weren't trees flying anymore. Some of the houses in the village had been completely blown away, leaving much work to be done, but Hiccup figured that he was not cut out for much physical work, so he managed to slip away into the forest. It had been "arranged" that Astrid would be on a hunting trip with Azure, so they were guaranteed to meet in the woods.

Walking along a path that he had memory upon memory with, Hiccup reflected what his father had said to him a few days earlier. _Before all the lovely ones get scooped up_. Could that really happen? Would Astrid leave him if he didn't act to keep her forever? It had been eating at him constantly.

He _wanted_ to believe that Astrid would never, ever leave him, no matter the circumstances, but the possibility was there. As he had said to his father, he wasn't physically attractive at all. If it came down to physical attraction, Hiccup might as well marry a rock.

He continued on down the path, kicking a little rock back and forth, trying to keep it as straight as possible. His attention was so focused on the rock that he walked straight into a smiling Astrid, "Whoa! Oh-uh..hi Astrid." Hiccup stuttered. The past year had given Hiccup a height advantage over Astrid, which she was none too pleased about, but it did help that Hiccup wasn't staring at her chest the whole time when they spoke.

"Hey there," Astrid said.

"Hey there beautiful," Hiccup said, smiling at her with his goofy smile. Grabbing her hand, they set off down the path.

"Some storm huh? five days of wind and rain, you'd think Thor was having a bad week," Astrid chirped.

"Yeah, the damage is heavy, but I'm glad nobody got seriously hurt or anything." Hiccup answered, trying to sound well-informed, but only succeeding in sounding like a goof.

Nevertheless, Astrid giggled at him and gave him his favorite look of all time. She would partially tilt her head to the left, her bangs revealing half of her left eye. While doing this, her head then tilts up, the sunlight making her skin glow. Her eyes would get large, their ice blue depths pulling him in, just begging him for a kiss.

She always got one.

Soon after, Hiccup and Astrid strolled down a far beach, holding hands and giggling about good times over the last year. Further down the beach was a small cave which led to a smaller beach that was rarely visited, which made it Hiccup and Astrid's favorite spot to be on warm days. However, today's visit would definitely not go as planned.

As they walked through the cave, Hiccup spotted an interesting looking rock which was reflecting the sunlight a bit, and stopped to take a closer look while Astrid continued on through to the next beach. Hiccup was deep in thought when a loud scream interrupted him.

It was Astrid's scream, for sure.

* * *

><p>Well, that's the first chapter, please read and review and pull no punches on those. Lemme know if its a bit long, or there should be more dialogue, etc. As I said, I'm new at this. PLEASE R&R!<p>

2. Foreboding Events

Well, here is Chapter 2, I'm thinking about changing the name of the story, but not sure, so be aware that the name may change. I promised that it would be better than Ch 1 and I hope y'all think so. This Chapter has some gruesome imagery in it, so beware of dog.

****DREAMWORKS OWNS EVERYTHING****

* * *

><p>Astrid had thought that her day would be a relaxing day with Hiccup, nice and lazy. Not anymore. As she had rounded the final turn of the cave, her blood turned cold, and her mind panicked. In front of her, laying all over the beach, was a scene from Ragnarok. A ship, or rather, the shredded and splintered remains of a ship, lay scattered all over the sand. The scene had frozen Astrid in place, her body not allowing her to step either back or forward.<p>

"Astrid! Astrid what's wro-" Hiccup's voice died as he gazed upon the wreck. It was truly terrible, and the overcast weather gave it a greyish, solemn hue, making the devastation of the ship that much more terrifying. The main hull of the ship lay in seven pieces at varying spots on the shore, the contents of it having been lost to the storm long ago. Pieces of canvas, probably from the sail lay draped over the wood, the torn fabric appearing as a solemn grave for any poor sailors.

She was grateful when Hiccup twined his fingers with hers and squeezed tight, pulling her with him as they began to slowly tread through the splintered planks and bent metal. Her eyes remained as wide as saucers taking in the full scale of it all. One thing she had noticed is that, if she was guessing correctly, this ship must have been huge. There was easily enough timber scattered around for two longboats, and then maybe a small fishing boat.

"What in Thor's name happened here?" Hiccup voiced in a low, devastated tone. Astrid could only shake her head at what she described as numbed terror. The scene was so horribly twisted and shattered, that if, if there was anything alive on this ship in the first place, there isn't anymore.

Stepping around a thoroughly destroyed piece of the hull, Astrid caught sight of a flag, drifting in a tide pool created by the ship when it ran aground.

"Hiccup, come look at this," Astrid called. "Have you ever seen that crest before?"

The crest she spoke of was black and gold, consisting of twisted and contorted lines that may have resembled a bear, but she couldn't be sure.

"Astrid...uh...ASTRID!" Hiccup began, his voice beginning to crescendo.

"ASTRID, GET AWAY FROM THE FLAG!" Hiccup yelled, grabbing her hand and pulling her away, dumping them both in the sand.

She was about to whip around and clobber him when she heard it. A rough wheeze. Then another, deeper and heavier. Looking around, she couldn't find the source of the breathing.

Looking at Hiccup, Astrid followed his eyes straight back to where she had been a moment before. Now looking at it from farther away, she could make out the form of a person lying beneath it. And, to her

renewed horror, a mere few inches from where she had been kneeling was a bloody hand.

Screaming, Astrid backed away at a frenzied crab walk, and she kept going until her back rested against a rock. Her breaths came in rapid and short and it took her a few minutes to compose herself. The hand was not severed, but was bloody on the palm, still giving it a devilish look.

"Oh my...great Odin's ghost..." she panted, her heart feeling like it was going to jump out of her throat.

Hiccup slowly inched forward, a branch he had picked up extended with his right hand trying to lift the flag and reveal who, or what, lay underneath it. Being soaked and laying in a small puddle of what Astrid thought to be water, Hiccup began to walk closer himself.

"Hiccup! Don't go near it," Astrid asked, "Please, lets go back to the village and tell your dad and some of the older vikings about this,"

"Astrid! Whoever is under that flag could be bleeding to dea-"

"Or they could be dead already, now lets go." Astrid said firmly.

She would keep her word to tell the appropriate people about this, but she would not try to carry a half-dead man or woman back to Berk. Her and Hiccup were simply not strong enough to do that anyway.

* * *

><p>Hiccup and Astrid ran back to Berk as fast as they could. The image of the hand and the sound of the wheezing were burnt into Hiccups memory, like a demon had appeared in front of him. But just as he was scared of it, he was unbearably curious.<p>

What had happened? What was the crest on the flag? Could the man underneath tell them these things?

All these thoughts crossed his mind while they ran. Once back home, Astrid scurried off to find the elder, while Hiccup went to go find his father. Running home, he threw open the door to find the room empty.

"Toothless! You here bud?" Hiccup called into the home, and the familiar roar greeted him as the black dragon came bounding out of his room, giving him a big, sloppy dragon lick.

"Alright bud, come on. We need to find dad," Hiccup said, breathing hard from running so much.

Soon, he was above the village on Toothless' back, his prosthetic locked into the special stirrup and his eyes scanning the ground for his dad. These were the times that Hiccup wished vikings didn't look the same from far away, but he did spot a commotion at the Elder's hut, which he knew was Astrid relating the story to everyone there.

In that crowd, Hiccup spotted his dad. Angling back down, Toothless landed soundlessly behind the crowd and gave a grunt, prompting all the vikings to part, "Dad!"

"Hiccup! What is Astrid saying? She's so hysterical we can't make heads or tails of it," Stoick muttered when Hiccup came close. He was right. Astrid was sitting down, but sweating and trying to talk so fast that she wasn't making any sense, "Astrid, hey. Calm down and relax, I'll tell them," Hiccup said softly.

After she had been taken inside, Hiccup, his father, Gobber and a few other men gathered at the edge of the forest.

"I was walking through the woods, minding my own, when I heard a scream. I ran to it, and there was Astrid looking at a shipwreck. Oh dad...the wreck...it's terribl-"

"We'll deal with that later, but finish up," Gobber said, a serious look on his face.

"Alright. Well, we walked through some of the wreckage and found this flag with this crest that I've never seen before on it, but that wasn't the big deal," Hiccup took a deep breath.

"There was a person underneath it, and I think that they're still alive." He finished.

The gathered vikings all mumbled and spoke in soft whispers, picking up battle axes and hammers. Gobber led the men towards the beach muttering something under his own breath as well.

Hiccup watched the men go with a feeling of satisfaction and grief. He was satisfied that help was being sent to the poor person who was there, but grief because he was afraid that he or she would be dead. Regardless, it was out of his hands now, so he had to rely that his father and Gobber would know what to do.

"Hey, Hiccup," he heard a voice behind him say, "What happened?"

Before Hiccup turned, he knew that it was Snotlout, "Well-uh-I heard a scream in the woods and it was Astrid...and...um-"

"Dude, we know that you and Astrid have a thing going, so you can skip that part for right now," Ruffnut scoffed.

"But, why why she like, losing her mind back there?" Tuffnut asked.

Hiccup turned and walked off, "Come on, I'm hungry. I'll tell you all while we eat," Hiccup said. The walk to Meade Hall was quick, the group saying nothing much beyond 'How are you' and 'Don't be an idiot'. The normal conversation for the group of teens.

Picking a table off to the the side, Hiccup slumped down into the seat, sighing.

"Alright, time to spill it," said Ruffnut.

"What happened?" Tuffnut finished, receiving a glare from his

sister.

And so, Hiccup dove into the story of how he and Astrid had arranged to meet in the forest and spend the day together, despite the dreary weather. Hiccup chose to leave out the part where he and Astrid had strolled down the beach, holding hands, deciding that it was not the right time to be talking about young romance.

"And then we found this big shipwreck. While we looked around, we saw this blood covered hand lying in the sand an-"

Snotlout spit out the food he was eating, "THERE WAS A DEAD GUY THERE!?" he cried, drawing the attention of the entire Hall. People dropped mugs and stared at the teens like they were nine headed dragons, prompting the need for a quick getaway.

"Snotlout, you're such a dumbass!" Hiccup hissed. The stares followed the teens as they inched out of the Hall. "Great now look what you did, the whole village will know about it before long," Hiccup groaned. He really didn't want this getting out and causing panic, but leave it to Snotlout to yell out the one thing you didn't want anyone else to hear.

"To appease your apparent excitement, Snotty, I don't think he was dead. Unless my hearing is terribly wrong, I heard him breathing." Hiccup muttered, annoyed at the lumpy boy.

Thinking about the whole ordeal again led Hiccup to wonder why nobody had seen a large ship approaching Berk in the first place. The vantage point that flight offered was unmatched, but nobody had seen a ship on the horizon or reported one. _A mystery ship, shattered. A mystery person, maybe bleeding to death._ Hiccup thought. _The winds are changing._

* * *

><p>Astrid walked slowly through a broken landscape, rubble being all she could see. It was cold, the wind blowing up snow, making the place look like a tundra, ruins covered in a blanket of unforgiving ice and ash. The twisted place howled, and dark shapes darted in and out of corners and cracks, almost whispering to her. She stepped through some rubble into what looked like the foundation of some building, her head turning to try and make sense of where she was. The charred wood still smoked, and weapons lay everywhere inside. Astrid jumped as a beam collapsed next to her, throwing snow and ash into her hair and eyes.

Brushing the sting from her eyes, Astrid spied a burnt curtain, still partially hanging off a small pole near the back wall of the building. Inspecting it, and the rubble in the small closet looking space, Astrid came to horrible realization: the little room was Hiccups office, and this blown out building was the forge. Horror seeped into her as, through the mist and smoke, she saw more buildings in the same state of desolation as the forge. Soon enough, she gazed at the entire village of Berk, destroyed and abandoned, like the end of the world had finally come.

_Walking up the path towards Meade Hall, Astrid's mind was a distraught mix of terror, grief and confusion. What happened? As she rose to the top of the cliff where Meade Hall stood, Astrid's heart

jumped with joy because the giant doors were wide open. But her heart had deceived her. Stepping through the broken doors, which were not just open, but completely taken off the hinges, she entered the Hall to find it abandoned and dark, except for the light from the doorway. Feeling her foot tap something, Astrid looked down and screamed._

Extending from the toe of her boot, dead bodies littered the hall, their faces frozen in painful expressions. Bodies laying over tables, against the walls, their blood dried by the cold. Following the light from the door, Astrid spied the only living thing in the hall.

A man. His back was facing her, covered in gashes and cuts, his blood still bright and flowing. In his hands he held a sword and an ax, both dripping. His body was covered, head to toe, in blood, bright crimson and steaming. Astrid's lungs and heart stopped working when the man began to turn, but, as his face came into the light...

"AHHHHHHH!" the scream was loud and full as she shot up in bed. Astrid's heart beat fast as she quickly rubbed her eyes and tried to see where she was. Soon, she realized that she was not in Meade Hall anymore, but back in her own body, in the healers lodge. Pulling her legs up to her chest, Astrid hugged herself, tears beginning to form in her eyes. The dream had been the most frightening thing she had experienced in almost her entire life, the other being when she didn't know if Hiccup was still alive following his fight with the Dragon Queen. She hated her dreams most of the time because, often, she thought her dreams might come true, and she was sure that if that dream came true, Berk would be a dead land.

She sat in the dark for almost an hour before she felt like moving, and then she was still tentative. She swung her legs out of the cot and stood, having to catch herself from falling back into a sitting position. Padding over to the window, Astrid decided that it was around the middle of the night, a crescent moon high in the star studded blanket that was the sky. Bringing her eyes back down to look to the ground, Astrid was happy to see the shape of Azure, sleeping outside the window. While dragon's hated the cold, Azure had shown in the past to be wholly devoted to Astrid, and if that meant sleeping in the cold to be near her rider, Azure would do it.

Another shape that had approached Azure drew Astrid's attention. She couldn't make out what it was, because it was just black. It inched up to Azure, but not waking her, so whatever it was, it was quiet. Then, as a shape slid off of the black thing, Astrid kicked herself for not knowing that Toothless was a jet black dragon, and his rider had come.

Opening the window, Astrid tried to keep her voice in a whisper, "Hiccup! Why are you here, you know how risky this is?"

"Couldn't help myself, and Toothless wouldn't go to sleep," he whispered back.

"Well, next tim-" her voice was muffled as his lips met hers in a tender kiss. Astrid lost herself in it for a moment, and if Hiccup could see her face in the dark, he would have seen her lips try to follow his as they broke the kiss.

"Dad and Gobber took some men to the ship," Hiccup said into the dark, "They're not back yet,"

"Hiccup, do you know what happened to me after we got back?" Astrid asked him. Thinking about where she was, it had dawned on her that she wasn't sure how she got there.

"Well, from what I know, you tried to tell everybody about what we saw and passed out. Not exactly sure how you went from being perfectly fine to passing out, but you've been sleeping since then." Hiccup said.

This revelation scared her more than Hiccup could comprehend. She was fine, then she passes out and has a dream in which everyone is dead? Astrid decided that the best thing to do was to keep to herself about it. No sense in causing outright panic over a dream.

"Hey, you know, it's a little cold out here, mind if I come in?" Hiccup asked shyly.

"Oh, I'm sorry," Astrid spluttered. What was she thinking, leaving him in the middle of the night out in the cold?

Once he was inside, Astrid enjoyed the warmth and comfort of his arms, his chest providing a nice place to rest her head. They were still embraced when they both froze, the sound of the door to the lodge opening, and a flurry of voices.

"...Quickly...bring him in here, someone go wake the healer..." It was Gobber, and the other voices must have been some of the men that Hiccup said had gone to the ship. Soon after, she heard the quiet, wise and calculating voice of the healer as she gave orders to what she needed, which Astrid, being quite an accomplished medical helper herself, knew were supplies to treat enormous injuries. They were much like the supplies needed when Hiccup had lost his leg, bringing Astrid's mind back to that horrible time.

"Hiccup, I think you should go. It wouldn't be helpful to either of us if Gobber strolled in here, or found Toothless out there," Astrid whispered, hating to send him away, "I'll be fine. We'll see tomorrow if the healer will let me leave." And with a kiss, Hiccup slipped out the window and onto Toothless. Waving, Toothless took off into the night, disappearing against the black sky.

* * *

><p>And there's Chapter 2! Please R&R!<p>

3. More Foreboding Events

And here is Chapter 3! Once again, I don't own anything, Dreamworks owns it all.

* * *

><p>The days following Hiccups midnight visit to the healers lodge were, for the most part, uneventful. The following morning, Astrid had been allowed to leave, but she and Hiccup remained apart to let any lingering rumors that they had met in the forest romantically

dissipate. Through all this though, nobody really knew who had been mysteriously put in the healers care, other than Astrid and Hiccup of course. The healer had not left that room for days, and bandages, food, water and different salve's had been flowing in by the hour. Whoever was in there was injured to the point of being dead.<p>

Hiccup of course knew that the person in there was the man from the shipwreck, as he had heard that night with Astrid. So, his father had made the decision to bring the man back to be healed, which was a good sign under any circumstance.

It was a cold day, but Hiccups work at the forge promised to keep him there for a long time. He had taken on a new project for his prosthetic. He had decided that if he made a wider foot, he could clothe his prosthetic, making him look pretty close to normal. The idea had occupied his mind while he was forging a new ax. The wide blade had to be fitted for a casing, and while doing this, it struck him that if his foot were wider, he could essentially case it as well. He had begun work as soon as Gobber was gone for the day, heating up the forge and digging out the schematics he had drawn up for it. The plan called for a wider foot, which of course meant a heavier foot. Hiccup would need to go through some physical training to cope with the heavier weight, but he felt that the end result would be worth the effort. And he would be able to spend more time with Astrid, under the guise that she is training him.

Bonus.

The years spent working the bellows of the forge, practicing pin point hammer strikes for metalwork and just working with ore had changed Hiccup from being awkward and weak to being lean and stringy, his arms boasting considerable applicable strength and his patience was legendary.

A knock at the door alerted Hiccup to someones presence. Fearing who it might be, Hiccup quickly threw on his shirt, covering the scars on his arms and chest, "Hello?" he called.

"It's me, Hiccup. We need to talk," said his father. Stoick leaned against the threshold, his eyes droopy and tired. Not surprising, considering the man had been hard at work clearing away the timber and scrap metal from the wreck for days on end with no sleep.

"Yeah dad, please sit down, you look terrible," Hiccup said, sliding a chair to his father. Stoick shook his head, "I'll only be here a minute, no doubt you've got things to do,"

And there was another thing that had changed in Berk during the past year. The people used to watch Hiccup's every move, and as a result, witnessed every mess the boy created. But now, the people respected his time, his father most of all. Stoick used to question what Hiccup was doing, at all moments of the day, and insist on seeing it himself, all the time. Hiccup could only hope for privacy if he slipped out into the forest and spent the entire day there, yet still some days his father would send search parties for him. Now, Stoick respected his sons time, and respected that now, Hiccup's activities would not end in certain disaster. To be truthful, it made Hiccup feel more...grown up. Like he should be making his own life now.

Like he should have a family.

"Hiccup, when you and Hofferson," Stoick winked at his son at the mention of that particular name, "found that ship, were there any signs of others? Were there any other bodies?"

"Well dad, you've spent more time than me there, so I could ask you the same thing," Hiccup replied shaking his head.

"Well, the man we found there has been in _intense_ treatment, but the healer said he will live. When he wakes, whenever that may be, I expect you and Astrid to take responsibility for him. If he has a home, find out so we can send him back, before the ice comes down on us. Anyway, I'm going to get some rest, good night son." the huge man said as he trundled out of the forge.

"G'night dad," Hiccup said to the shrinking form of his father.

Sighing and rubbing his sore arms, Hiccup returned to work on the foot, which was now a piece of molten steel. Whipping off his shirt once more, Hiccup clamped the huge tongs onto the piece and laid it on the anvil. The strikes needed to be just perfect to keep the thickness of the piece consistent throughout its length, so Hiccup needed to be extra careful. Timing his hammer with the cooling of the steel, he worked like a master, his movements fluid and decisive. Due to his careful nature, Hiccup often needed to reheat the metal to the point when it became malleable again, only extending the time needed to perfect it, but the end result would be worth the perseverance. After what seemed like an eternity of hammering, Hiccup folded the metal in on itself, creating what would be the sole of his new metal foot. Working doubly hard to keep the metal both heated and consistent, Hiccup flew into a trance, the beat of the hammer and the sound of sizzling metal congealing into a single melodious note in his mind, much like Astrid's voice when he caught her singing in the forest on bright, cool evenings.

The hammer felt like a feather in his hands, the swings effortless and precise, turning what was once junk from a heap into a master-crafted steel foot. One thing remained before the metal was tempered and cooled. Grabbing a thick, long tool that curved ever so slightly at the end.

Hiccup had practiced and trained for countless hours to perfect the technique he was about to perform. He had attempted to quicken his hand while still being precise, which had resulted in a good number of burns. His time spent alone often took the form of poring over thousands of drawings, and redrawing them, getting the lines and details absolutely right. He would only have one shot at this, and it had to be perfect.

To avoid any distractions, he locked the door and doused all the lamps, other than what he needed. Getting ready, he set up a small furnace made of coals on which he rested the foot of steel to keep it hot, and began the drawing of a lifetime.

His hand, and the tool in it, flowed like water across the face, carving lines and curves perfectly. After about an hour of carving, reheating, and carving again, Hiccup finally dropped the foot into a

barrel of ice water. The sweat poured off him like a river, and his arm screamed at him. Hiccup took it all in stride though, because he knew, just knew that the end result would be worth it all. Sitting down and pouring himself some water, Hiccup downed four mugs before he let out a long sigh. Work had been long and arduous, and it was early morning. Time to sleep.

* * *

><p>Astrid had been unable to sleep through the night since her dream in the healers lodge. For a few nights, she didn't sleep much at all, but the past two, she had slept some and woken restlessly. Now, she sat next to Azure in her room, scratching the dragon's sapphire blue head. Azure, since moving into the house, had taken up residence in front of a fireplace Astrid had Hiccup build in her room. The fire could be lit at any time to keep both the room, and its demanding dragon resident, happy and warm. Astrid, clad in only scant leggings and a tight shirt, sat up while wrapping herself in a fur. Azure still slept, her sides only moving slightly as she breathed. Deciding against waking her dragon, Astrid sat in her bed and thought carefully about the dream from that night, and what she could pull forth as details.<p>

The destruction of the town was one detail that would certainly stand out, but for the town to be destroyed, the god of war himself would have to come down upon them. Unlikely. her mind quoted. Thinking carefully, Astrid determined that none of the faces she had managed to see inside Meade Hall were faces that she knew, leaving some glimmer of hope that even if the village was destroyed, the people were not destroyed with it. But, the village is destroyed? Why in Hel would the village be destroyed? Astrid thought, scratching at her loose hair.

Astrids practice of wearing her hair down to sleep is one that she guarded heavily. All through her childhood and upbringing, she had been the very icon of the words strong and tough. Her family, being poor as they were, were forced to live harshly at times, only eating once a day and working eighteen hours a day to make ends meet. All the other children dare not mess with her because she was a bomb without a fuse back then. Even something as small as a playful nudge sent her into a furious rage because she always felt that the other kids thought less of her because her father was not bathing in dragon trophies and honor. More wealthy families often pushed them around, jeering at how Astrid and her little brother wore patched and damaged clothes, how when the traders came around, the Hoffersons could only watch as wonderful clothes and fabrics were bought.

That treatment of her family pushed Astrid into deciding that she would never, could never be pushed around, and the Hofferson clan would be respected. Since Hiccup had broken the generations of viking tradition by becoming the first dragon rider, there was no longer any need to win respect for her family. In fact, since she had been one of the original six riders, she was seen as both a mentor and teacher of great respect among the people. Despite that though, Astrid enjoyed her toughness and the gleeful feeling she got after beating bigger, stronger men in sparring. Her almost unbeatable trait was that her mind moved faster than most while she fought. She formulated every single move that she would attempt in a slight order, but just that foresight gave her a huge edge. She rarely lost to anyone her age or within a few years.

The hair fell down to the middle of her back like rivers of gold, shiny in even the dimmest light. Braiding it took around an hour, maybe more on days that she was groggy, but very few people knew that she let her hair down to sleep.

Sitting back against the wall that her bed was pushed against, Astrid let her mind wisp and wander. She flashed through all the times she sat up in this exact same spot wracking her brain as to why an inglorious, clumsy oaf named Hiccup was beating her in Dragon Training. Then she flashed through the times when she sat there thinking about how slow the night moved and about when she could see him again. She thought about the terrible night she had spent wondering if he was even going to alive the next day. Her mind swirled and churned, but every thought centered around the man she saw at the forge near every day of her life.

She must have fallen asleep like that, because when she opened her eyes again, her neck and back hurt from being leaned on all night, and her legs had fallen asleep on her. _Crap, I overslept._ She thought, frowning at the little cracks of Azure's door that were bright with sun. Wincing as she tried to move, Astrid began to punch her thighs and calves to wake them up, and wincing again as the pins and needles started to roll up and down her knees. After a few moments, she had her legs back. Looking around, she found Azure beginning to grumble as the dragon woke up for the day, and found that her fire had been lit. Who had lit her fire? She was sure that her mother would have smacked her for sleeping against the wall like that, so it wasn't her. Her little brother was too young to be lighting random flames, so it wasn't him. Had Hiccup done it, he would still be there, but the boy was nowhere to be found. Azure would have been too busy getting her beauty sleep to do it, so...who had been in her house, in her very room that morning?

Well, that's a bit scary. She thought. Leaping in place to get her blood flowing, Astrid considered what she would do today.

"Well girl, I guess today I should meet up with Hiccup again. And then we can go flying!" She said excitedly to a still drowsy Azure. The dragon woke up slowly, but once she was awake, the day could begin. Sighing at her dragon's apparent lack enthusiasm for waking up, Astrid began to dress herself for the day. It all began with the braiding of her long, long hair...

My hair! Whoever was in here knows I let it loose to sleep! She thought ruefully. She would have to find out who it was. Shaking that off, she braided her hair and slipped her woolen shirt over it carefully. After, she strapped on her studded shoulder pads, something she loved to wear and rarely removed in public. Then, a fur lined, skin tight pair of pants, followed by the one thing Astrid _never_ left her house without: her spiked skirt. It was the trademark of Astrid Hofferson, the other girls being too "cute" to wear one, or anything like it. Her father had saved up for weeks to get the skirt made for her, and it was just before her birthday when he died in a dragon raid. Her eyes were still puffy from crying when Gobber gave her the skirt, saying that her father had it made for her. That being said, Astrid never went anywhere without it, other than bed. Next were her hand-guards, two fur coated gloves that wrapped around her palm, leaving her fingers free to work, and to top it off, her headband. Getting ready took twenty minutes to a full

hour, depending on how her hair wished to cooperate.

It was a wonderful feeling when your hair was the biggest thing to worry about.

Leaving Azure to wake some more, Astrid opened her door and entered the main room of the house, where her mother had left some mutton and bread for breakfast. Everything was in order, pots and bowls neatly stacked, weapons hanging on the wall, spare fabric in order by color...

"What in Thor's name?" Astrid said audibly. The shelf where all the fabric and spare leather was kept looked as if it had been raided by Terrible Terrors. Everything was strewn and ripped, the needles were all dumped out on the floor and some of cloth was just gone.

After cleaning and taking inventory, she found that a full spool of twine was missing, along with six needles and a rather big piece of purple cloth. Something was going on, and Astrid was beginning to get concerned. Figuring to ask around at Meade Hall about anything funny happening, Astrid wolfed down the food, and called Azure, who came flying around the outside of the house to land outside the door. The rush of cold air surprised her a little bit as she threw open the large wooden door and stepped out into the sun. It was one of those days when the sun was shining, but it was still bitterly cold. Scrambling onto Azure's back, Astrid felt the rush she always did when the blue dragon took off: A rush of air and exhilaration as she climbed into the air, looking down on the village like a god. However, when she did look down upon the village, it was not peaceful and calm as most mornings. People were running about, checking buildings, Stoick and Gobber yelling orders and one thing caught Astrid's eye especially: they were all armed.

"Check every building close to the lodge! Look for stains, footprints, anything!" Stoick yelled at Hoark and some other men. Every single one of them carried chains and hammers, but the hammers were too small to cause any severe harm, even when swung by a viking. Those looked much bigger from the air. Astrid thought, getting some humor from the notion.

"Astrid! Come here," Stoick yelled up to her, and she complied quickly. One thing she had learned was that a bad morning Stoick was the worst Stoick, so following his orders were in her best interests right now.

"Coming!" She yelled back, compelling Azure to get to the ground. Once landed, she shied away from the shadow of the chief as he came closer, "Astrid, do you know anything about what happened last night?" he asked.

"Last night? No what happened?" Astrid said, wondering what could possibly be going on now.

"Well, Astrid, it seems that someone we know escaped from the healers lodge during the night," Hiccup said, landing next to her on Toothless. She blinked for a moment.

"Wait, did you say escaped? He wasn't locked up or anything," she said, more asking than actually saying.

"He managed to leave the lodge without waking the healer, who was sleeping in a chair next to his bed, without breaking anything, and without being detected by any of the night patrols, so we have begun to use the term "escape", " Gobber declared, ambling over, "Because nobody knew of his leaving until we discovered that he was gone."

For some inexplicable reason, Astrid was not surprised by these facts, as if she half _expected_ such a thing to happen. Weird.

"Well where could he have gone? Out into the woods?" She asked the air around them.

"Not even a mindless fool would try to brave the wilderness of Berk in the middle of the night," Stoick answered,

"And I don't think were dealing with a fool, so I think he has taken up hiding in a building in the village. Makes the most sense."

The chiefs eyes glittered. He lived for this sort of thing, for uncovering and eliminating a real and present threat to the people. Since the pact with dragons, Stoick had been handling issues like who owned which rock according to property lines, so a good search and destroy was high on his wish list, and he got it.

"Well, you know, there were some we-" Astrid stopped herself before going on.

"What's that?" Stoick asked, looking at her expectantly.

"Nothing, it was nothing," Astrid quickly mumbled, wilting under the huge mans gaze until he got distracted by something. She took the opportunity to scramble over to Hiccup, "What the Hel is happening here?" She demanded.

Hiccup shook his head and mounted Toothless, pulling her up with him prompting a suspicious gurgle from Azure, "Alright dad good luck!" He called, his father waving at him absently.

"Don't worry girl! I'll be back!" Astrid yelled back to Azure as Toothless took off and climbed to the clouds, making the wind flow through Astrid's hair, one of her favorite feelings. The blue dragon visibly pouted, but set off towards the nearest water so she could preen.

Once high enough so that he was just a silhouette in the sky, Toothless leveled off, gliding lazily on warm updrafts. Hiccup turned in his seat and smacked a kiss on Astrid's cheek, sending tingles through her body, "Good morning," he said, smiling.

"Good morning! Now, what happened? Your dad talks really fast when he's all excited," She chirped, hugging him closer.

"OK, so this morning, I was feeding Toothless, and one of the younger kids ran up to me yelling 'The man is gone! The man is gone!'"

"I couldn't make heads or tails of it, but I knew that this was one of the kids that the healer and elder watch during the day while their parents work, so I went to the lodge. Once I got there, the

healer told me that the man that had been brought in a few nights ago was gone- just gone. No signs of breaking out, no signs of hostile intent. He was just gone." Hiccup said some other things, but Astrid wasn't listening at that point.

So, the man from the shipwreck had disappeared, and Astrid had some weird things happen at her house.

Creepy.

* * *

><p>There you go! Please be wonderful people and review!
**

4. Appearance

Chapter 4! Once again, I don't own it, Dreamworks does. There is some mythology in here and there will be more in the coming chapters, I promise to explain if need be.

* * *

><p>Toothless landed not far from where they had discovered the shipwreck, and Astrid got butterfly's in her stomach, being so close to it again. The beach was pockmarked with thousands of footprints from Gobber, Stoick and the men who had been here for those few days. Also on the beach were logs and campfires, obviously used to camp there during the nights. The spits used to roast elk, bear and wild pigs were still there, the blackened charcoal littering the rocky circles.<p>

"Hiccup, why did we come back here?" Astrid asked him, her eyes darting around the beach and treeline. Her heart raced much faster because she knew that a foreign person who was obviously very capable was running silently wild, and she wasn't sure if he was hospitable or hostile.

Hiccup looked down at Toothless, then at the beach, then back at Toothless, "Buddy, what are we doing here? I thought we were going to the cove?" He said to the Night Fury.

Toothless looked up at him with slitted eyes, like they were when he brought them to the Red Death's island a year ago. Hiccup had taught Astrid enough about dragons to know that when their eyes turned to slits, it meant that instinct was taking over, that something was drawing them to wherever they wanted to go.

But, there was nothing of real significance that she could see on the beach that would attract Toothless. Again, very weird.

"Hiccup, do you think that guy wants to...hurt us?" She asked, hoping that he would share her belief that he would not want to cause them harm.

"I can't say Astrid. One would think that if he had good intentions, he would have stayed in the healers lodge. At the same time, why would a person with bad intentions want to wander around so injured?" Hiccup answered. She could tell that his mind was running the same

scenarios as hers, but he had reminded her that while free, and unknown, the stranger was badly hurt. That really limited what he could possibly do under normal circumstances.

After Astrid and Hiccup had gotten off, they watched Toothless prowl across the beach, sniffing the sand, the rocks and almost everything else. Soon though, he settled to sniffing at a single spot, even digging there with one clawed foot for a moment or two. Hiccup scoffed and grabbed Astrid's hand, leading her into the woods.

"You know, sometimes Toothless completely mystifies me, like Loki is messing with me or something," Hiccup groaned as they strolled through the shade of tall pines, the sweet, fresh smell of pine sap lingered in the air, birds chirped at each other as they zipped through the trees. It was all very peaceful, which was the very opposite of the weird things happening at the village.

Astrid tightened her grip on Hiccup's hand, trying to squeeze hard enough to get a reaction. A fun game that she played, and she used to win. Not anymore though. All Hiccup had to do was flex his hand once and she gave up. His blacksmith's hand had a grip harder than iron, even though he rarely showed it.

"No fair! Why can't I win anymore?" She pouted playfully, her lip curling in defeat as her hand wilted in his flesh covered vice. Hiccup laughed and stopped walking, taking Astrid's hand in both of his.

During Dragon Training, Astrid thought she had Hiccup figured out. Then he beat her there. Then, after killing the Red Death and falling in love with the young man, she thought she knew all there was to know about Hiccup Haddock. She lost again.

Hiccup's hands, although calloused and rough, could handle things with such a gentle touch that one could easily forget that he was a blacksmith at all. His skin was warm to the touch, and he placed a gentle kiss on her palm, "All better?" he asked, grinning.

"Better," Astrid mumbled, treasuring his touch.

"Volundr blessed you with those hands," Astrid said, pulling herself into his chest, closing her eyes. Feeling his long arms wrap around her, she listened to the slow, steady, methodical beat of Hiccup's heart, almost like it was working in a smithy, just like him.

* * *

><p>As this rare beauty snuggled into his chest, Hiccup hummed a tune that he remembered his mother using when he couldn't sleep, or had nightmares. It was one of the very few things that he himself remembered about her, and he hummed it whenever he felt relaxed and blissful. Easy decision, because whenever he and Astrid were together alone, Hiccup treated it as if Freya were accompanying him, and he couldn't be happier. Although Toothless was confusing him to frightening levels, as was the behavior of all the dragons recently, he didn't want to think about it.<p>

"Hiccup, I meant to ask you, but I forgot," Astrid mumbled into his shirt.

"What is it?"

"Since when did your foot grow back?" she asked, stepping away from him, her eyes glued to the full pants and boots he now wore-on both feet.

He scratched his head, chuckling at his own stupidity. He had brought Astrid out into the woods to show her the new foot in the first place. How had he forgotten that?

"Well, it's not a new foot, but rather a modified prost-"

"_I know_ it's not a new foot, Hiccup, I wasn't born yesterday," Astrid scoffed, rolling her eyes at him.

Why do you say such stupid things around her? Hiccup's mind yelled at him while he readied himself for the punch that usually followed annoying the blond viking. He was surprised when it didn't come.

"Right, sorry. I brought you out to show you this project of mine. I made a brand new prosthetic that's wider, so I can wear clothes! I even tweaked the flap rig on Toothless! Isn't it great? I can look normal now!" He said enthusiastically. For the whole day, Hiccup had been walking around with his new prosthetic, and even though nobody really noticed it, he was overjoyed when his feet looked...normal. For the first time since the Red Death, he looked normal!

Astrid looked a bit unsettled, feeling the boot and the steel underneath it, "This is big," she said.

"How are you compensating for the weight?"

Taking a step back and doing what could be construed as a jump, he almost collapsed on the landing. While he was optimistic about the whole idea of having a clothed foot again, it really was much heavier than he had anticipated. It was all he could do to even get the thing on that morning, and his first steps had looked more akin to dragging a ball and chain than walking. Not only was he going to have to get stronger, but _a lot_ stronger. Initially, he was intending to get fit and lean, working with the weight of the foot instead of handling it. Now, he knew he would actually need to build muscle to move appropriately. Running and even jogging were entirely out of the question for the time being. At least, he thought so.

"Well, uh, you see. I'm not compensating for anything. Right now, I'm kinda-uh-"

"Dragging it behind you as dead weight?" she finished for him.

"Yeah," he sighed, sounding defeated. When things got serious, Astrid pulled _no_ punches with him. If there was a cruel truth, she let him have it full in the face, no padding involved. He loved every second of it.

"I had hoped that we would get loads more time together if you would train me," he said, smiling wolfishly, the thought of him and her sweating it out together getting intoxicating.

"Hiccup, spending time together is all well and good, but _training_? You realize that physical training isn't a lazy day on Toothless' back, right? If we train you, which we will, I promise you it will not be easy. At all." She declared, crossing her arms in front of her chest.

That night, Hiccup flopped onto the bench in Meade Hall, using all his strength to haul his foot behind him. Astrid had not been kind to him that day, and he was feeling it. All the way, she said it was all part of getting stronger, but Hiccup didn't think that half the stuff she had him do had anything to do with strength.

"What happened to you? Toothless use you for a chew toy or something?" Tuffnut asked, faking sympathy. Hiccup raised a single finger off the table and groaned, "Astrid,"

Ruffnut sat down, "Astrid happened to you? Well of course, no way you could get her on your own," the tall girl said, snickering. Even since becoming great friends and fellow dragon trainers, Ruffnut had always been critical of Hiccup's chances of attracting a nice girl. The Thorston family were renowned match-makers, and had a crucial hand in almost all weddings and engagements. Ruffnut herself had a keen eye for good couples and couples that were destined to fail, and had no qualms about telling people that their marriage would fail. And while she was yelled at, cursed at and otherwise repulsed during these situations, those marriages habitually failed. It was an uncanny ability that had led to Ruffnut being the center of attention for girls reaching the stage of being interested in guys.

So naturally, she had a trail of younger teenage girls following her everywhere.

"Miss, do you think I could get a big, muscly boy?"

"Miss, will my man be smart?"

"Will he be rich?"

"Will he be an important person?"

"Will he be handsome?"

"CAN I EAT DINNER IN PEACE?" Ruffnut shrieked.

"You know what, you girls see that table over there?" she said pointing to a table of boys about the same age, "Go and bug them right now."

The little girls giggled and scurried over. Ruffnut sighed, "I can't get a moments peace these days,"

Hiccup managed a strained, tired laugh and then stood to go and get some food. The hall was full of food and drink every single day, and today was spiced pork. Delicious.

"Oh hello there Hiccup," said a deep, but obviously female voice. Hiccup turned around and found himself speaking to Astrid's mother. "Oh hi, how are you this evening?" He said politely.

"Wonderful. I wanted to thank you for lighting Astrid's bedroom fire

this morning, she gets cold during the ni-

"Her bedroom fire? Yeah, I remember you telling me that she never lights it, so I got Toothless to go and light it for her."

Smiling as her mother walked off, Hiccup thought carefully._ Her fire? I didn't light her fire. What's going on here?_ He was too tired to fully pursue the matter now.

Returning to the table, Hiccup greeted both Snotlout and Fishlegs who had arrived from their respective classes. Since the Dragon Academy had opened, hopeful riders had flocked in from all over, ranging from mere children between ten and twelve up to young men and women in their twenties. Over time, each of the original six had established different classes for riding their dragons. Prospective trainers began their learning with Hiccup who taught a general knowledge for training and riding a dragon. Then, once old enough, the novice riders chose which dragon they wished to ride of the Berkian flush: Gronckle, Hideous Zippleback, Monstrous Nightmare or Deadly Nadder. Each of the originals taught specific classes on how to ride their specific dragon, along with the secrets of the species. For example, Astrid taught Nadder riders how to best live with the vanity of a Nadder instead of against it, and how to not agitate the dragon's sensitive routine.

Should the young riders want to learn the much more specific bits of dragon training and riding, they can go with Hiccup once again and learn about unique dragons and how to ride those. Hiccups pride and joy had been when he taught a twenty two year old girl how to ride a Timberjack that lived near her home. It had become the job of a lifetime, and he would not do anything else better.

"And then, the poor kid got his butt lit on fire!" Snotlout cried, bursting into laughter. Tuffnut was the only one of them that followed suit, Fishleg's deciding to remain somewhat more composed, and Ruffnut just rolled her eyes.

"Snotlout, why do you always yell like you've been drinking for hours?" Hiccup groaned, staring at the pork on his plate with loving eyes before he tore into it.

"Because I love being optimistic about life," Snotlout retorted.

"It's a more attractive thing to do for the ladies," he droned on with his same routine of explaining why he was the best choice for any woman on Berk and how everyone should be like him and blah blah blah.

"And _speaking_ of lovely ladies," Snotlout called as the Hall's doors opened and Astrid walked in. She had been at the elders lodge picking up her little brother when her and Hiccup had separated.

"Shut up," Astrid said lazily, sitting down with some mead. Hiccup was tired, but so was she from the days workout, so her eyes were as droopy as his were.

"So, Astrid. Did you and Hiccup have a nice time together?" Ruffnut droned, fighting the urge to laugh.

"Well Ruffnut, I don't know, ask me when I'm done drinking," the blond viking answered.

Drinking was something the teens did regularly, usually following a hard or stressful day. The honeyed mead was a hard thing to resist, but they did not partake every day, as their parents usually did. Astrid, however, was a little more spirited when it came to the sweet liquor and indulged more than the others. Hiccup and Toothless had brought her home in a stupor several times after long hunting trips, and a few times it took heavy scrubbing to get the hardened vomit off of Toothless.

"So, did the men find out anything about the guy from the lodge?" Hiccup asked, talking more to Fishleg's than the others.

"Nope. No sign at all. It's like his stealth factor is a perfect 10. There weren't even footprints. I've only seen these kinds of things when it comes to dragons," he said, throwing his hands in the air. Fishleg's was the walking version of the dragon manual, and even he seemed unnerved.

"There were literally no signs of which way he may have went from the lodge, no sign of where he even exited the building, no sign of him taking anything, no sign of him hurting anyone, no sign of even broken twigs!" He cried, slamming his fist on the table, drawing stares. Fishleg's was extremely reserved, so to show emotion like that was entirely unlike him.

"Fishleg's, what's going on? What's up with you?" Hiccup asked him, trying to calm the boy down.

"Hiccup, guys," he gestured to the rest of the table, "I crave statistics, information, patterns, indications. There is nothing like that here! Not even the common behavior of a single individual of the male gender who recently liberated himself from indirect incarceration!"

Hiccups mind ran like mad to understand the meaning of what Fishlegs was saying. From general assumptions, he concluded that Fishleg's was, once again, going off into an intellectual rant that nobody could really make heads or tails of, other than himself.

"Okay Fishlegs, you need to calm down. Relax, get some mead, do something, but speak normally," Hiccup said, laying a hand on his friend's shoulder. The big viking shook his head and instead left Meade Hall, probably to go and ponder the situation five hundred more times.

Watching him go, Snotlout began laughing, "Why does it always seem like Fishlegs lives in his own little world?" he snorted. The twins gave him a sneer and shook their heads, Astrid ignored him, but Hiccup couldn't.

"Why does it always seem like you don't care about other people?" Hiccup droned, still too tired to really lift himself off the table.

Snotlout looked ready to punch him when a loud boom interrupted them. It shook the entire Hall and cries of surprise rang out.

"Hiccup, whats happening?" Astrid said, standing up and flashing looks at the doors and the roof of the Hall.

"I know as much as you do," He answered. A minute later, Fishlegs came barreling back through the huge double doors, yelling like a mad man, "The dragons! The Nightmares have gone crazy!"

Following him through, three Nightmares, all on fire, roared as they crashed through tables and pillars, knocking huge vikings around like toys.

Hiccup quickly scanned the situation.

Okay, three raging Nightmares. Wonderful.

Complete chaos. Not so wonderful.

"Astrid! Snotlout! We have to calm them down, c'mon!" he yelled. Even the weight of his foot seemed lighter as the adrenaline coursed through his veins like fire, overcoming any sores or pains that he had complained about before.

Jumping over tables, Astrid herded most of the young children into a side chamber off the hall and sealed the door while Snotlout worked on calming the closest Nightmare. Having a year of experience, Snotlout was adept at calming the dragons, even if not so adept at riding his own. Soon, he had the dragon relaxed and out of the hall, leaving two more.

Hiccup cautiously approached one of them, his hands extended. The idea was that the show of respect calmed a Nightmare down to the point of being docile, and that was exactly what he wanted right now. A docile dragon.

Soon enough, the second Nightmare had been calmed and ushered out of the Hall, which left the last Nightmare, which for all the trouble, seemed like he was calmed as well. Astrid was stroking his snout and whispering to the dragon, who was humming contentedly, but still acting funny.

As he approached, Hiccup noticed that the dragons eyes kept flitting up to the giant sculpture hanging from the rafters, and to the shadowy corners of the roof. Almost like he was looking for something up there. Regardless, the situation was under control.

"Okay, nice job guys. Doesn't look like too much damage, so I'd say crisis averted," Hiccup said, clapping a hand on Snotlout and Astrid's shoulders.

"Well, I'd say this guy is the most mild-tempered of the al-" Astrid was interrupted when a huge voice boomed from the entrance.

"WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?" Stoick the Vast roared. All in a moment, the Nightmare that Astrid had been petting turned again to madness. Lighting itself on fire once again, it roared and knocked both Hiccup and Snotlout over tables and sending debris flying. Rolling, Astrid made a dash towards the cover of an overturned table. She almost got away when the Nightmare pinned her to the ground with its right talons.

She screamed as one of the talons pierced her left hip, not going deep, but the gash was long and it wasn't long before blood started to soak her and the ground.

"Dad! Help her!" Hiccup yelled, but to no avail as a giant pot had pinned his father to the wall near the door. The dragon snarled and screeched, driven by some unknowing instinct to violence.

"Astrid! Don't worry we'll help you! Just hol-" Hiccup stopped when the dragon's fire went out, and it released its hold on Astrid. Hiccup flew to her side, as did many other vikings in the hall, but the strangest part of it all was the dragon itself. It had turned itself around and was staring at something.

Moving around it, Hiccup's gasp joined the chorus of gasps that sounded through the gathered people.

The Nightmare was staring into the silver eyes of a man Hiccup had seen only once before in his life.

That time, he had been only inches from death.

That time, he had been the only survivor of a catastrophe.

Standing toe to toe with the dragon was the man from the wreck.

* * *

><p>And there it is! R&R!

5. Tyr Pretor

And Here's Chapter 5! Once again, I don't own anything DREAMWORKS owns it all.

* * *

><p>Her body screamed in agony. The rip in her hip burned and throbbed, but she wasn't paying attention to it right then. Astrid, just like everyone else, eyed the face off that was taking place before them. The Nightmare sniffed the air around him, and looked up and down the man with careful eyes.<p>

He, on the other hand, stayed still as the dragon inspected him, not flinching or even blinking. His silver eyes followed the dragons every move, not allowing one detail to escape.

With a huff, the Nightmare nuzzled into the man almost lovingly.

"Whoa, put that down," she heard Hiccup say as the he drew a dagger. He flashed a look at Hiccup, saying nothing. The dagger was covered in some sort of ooze; a thick, blackish red ooze.

He remained silent as he changed his focus. To Astrid.

Through her tear blurred vision, Astrid saw the forms of Hiccup, the Twins, Snotlout and Fishlegs surround her. Hiccup stood directly in

the mans path, while the others ringed around.

"Hiccup...stop it. He's got a weapon, don't do anything..." She spluttered through the dull but enormous pain in her side, gritting her teeth as it throbbed after every word.

"No Astrid, I'm not goi-"

"You want her to bleed to death?" The man said, his voice deep, echoing in the silence of the Hall.

"If not," he continued, his eyes sharp and unfeeling.

"Move."

Unsure if it was the chance of him helping her, or if it was the commanding tone of his voice, but Astrid listened as her friends and all the other vikings in the hall shuffled away from him, leaving her in a ring about ten feet wide with this silver eyed stranger.

As he came closer, Astrid couldn't make out anything about him, other than the shape of the dagger in his right hand, which her eyes refused to leave. The other detail that struck her was that even though her vision was blurred by tears and darkened with pain, his silver eyes almost shone at her.

This is it. I'm going to die. She thought to herself.

Her head rocked back on the stone slabs that made the floor of the Hall and awaited that moment when her world would go dark. A shadow passed over her and she heard the stranger say, softly, "I'm sorry,"

She felt the cold of the dagger blade press against the flayed skin of her hip and proceed down, coating her wound with the ooze from the blade.

"What are you doing? How is this goin-" Astrid couldn't continue as a new pain rifled through her body. She let out a hellish scream and began to writhe on the ground, her blood feeling as if it had been laced with oil and set ablaze. Something held her down, but her mind was white, her vision was white. She could see nothing, hear nothing, and felt only pain. An endless world of pain, as if Hel marched on her blood, wracking her body with the fire and lava of the underworld and sentencing her to an afterlife of suffering.

She was not yet old enough for Odin to grant her passage into Valhalla, and those who did not go to Valhalla went to serve Hel or became the daily meal of Fenris, to be eaten alive and then reborn just to be eaten again for the rest of eternity. Feeling the numbness of mind and the darkening of senses, Astrid wished that she could have said goodbye to her mother and brother, to Azure, to her friends, and most of all, to Hiccup.

_It was cold. The air was stale and heavy. Astrid knew where she was when she stepped into the ruins of the building. She once again found Hiccup's office in the forge, but it was different. There were more plans than before, more formulas and other things she couldn't understand. The forge itself seemed different entirely. The ruined

walls had writing on them, but not writing Astrid knew how to read. It wasn't even the runes that the Hairy Hooligans used day to day. These runes were jagged, as if carved by dying men using weapons. Shaking it off, Astrid continued on her predetermined path._

She found the same with the barren ruin that was the village. There were differences, subtle differences, but they were there. She could see giant silhouettes through the smoke, and some of the buildings had different paint and decorations on them before they were destroyed. Astrid particularly noticed a wreath of skulls, something she knew nobody on Berk had, nor would they display if they did have such a macabre trophy. There was nothing alive in the barren village, and once again, she proceeded to Meade Hall, increasing her pace to a run.

Again, she was horrified by the mounds of bodies in the hall, the complete and seemingly emotionless killing of so many people tugging at her heart.. Her eyes flew to the center of the hall and, illuminated by the light, was the blood soaked back of the one who was their killer. The light was brighter this time, and he turned to face her. This time, he turned completely around, his chest looking much like his back. The blood shone bright on him, and his leg rose to take a step forward. It seemed like an eternity before it hit ground once again, but as his body followed it into the light...

She opened her eyes to see a dark wooden roof of what she guessed was once again the healers lodge. She was sore, but in all honesty, not terribly sore. The bed she was in was bigger than hers, and actually bigger than the bunk at the lodge. Astrid sat up a bit faster than she would have liked, and as a result spent a minute with her eyes closed, breathing deeply to dispel the daze in her head.

After she had gotten her composure back, Astrid took a look around the room. To her surprise and inner elation, she was in Hiccups house! _Wait, why am I in Hiccups place? _She thought, getting a bit confused. She did remember the Hall, the dragons, the silver eyed guy and her hip. Her torn up hip. _My hip!_ She thought frantically, and she lifted the furs she was laying under.

First off, she was as naked as the day she was born. For a minute, a blush hit her face with the force of Thor's hammer. She was naked, and in Hiccups bed. Her body grew hot, but she shook her head, knowing that it was not the thing to be thinking about right now. However, she would be sure to revisit the topic later, preferably in his company.

Resuming her initial search, Astrid glanced at her left hip, dreading what she may find. Opening her eyes, she gasped and covered her mouth.

Her hip was serenely perfect. The skin was smooth and shared the color of the rest of her leg. The only sign of there ever being anything wrong with it was a single, jagged scar. There was no discoloration or bruising, the biggest problem was that her leg was stiff. When she moved, it felt like her entire leg moved, or none of it did. Bending it would prove to be a painful task, because she would have to physically bend her leg, against its own will, which in any case would hurt. A lot.

As assumed, the task was excruciating and loud. It felt like she was trying to break a tree limb, except that limb was her own damn leg. Eventually, she had it bent over and was able to sit on the side of the bed, bringing the furs with her to keep wrapped up against the chill of the house.

It was definitely Hiccups house, no doubt about it. The large amount of gadgets and knick knacks in the room said that she was in his personal bedroom, and if she was in his bedroom, then where was he?

Looking over at a chair against the wall, Astrid was glad to find that her clothes had been neatly folded and prepared for her. Standing up to retrieve them, Astrid heard a bump behind her.

Ripping the furs back up to cover herself and spinning wildly, Astrid breathed hard as she stared into the darkness of the room.

As she stared, the darkness began to _move_. Began to shift, like tendrils.

Her pent up breathe was let out in a whoosh as she found herself looking at the large, green, curious eyes of Toothless. The dragon had been hanging from the rafters by his tail, and had just jumped off, landing in front of her.

"Oh hey Toothless!" She exclaimed, taking a step forward to pet his head. When she did, her stiff leg refused to move with her, and buckled. Lucky enough, Toothless was fast enough to cross the room and catch her on his wide head.

Astrid sighed and picked herself up, regaining her balance, although she was still wobbly.

"Thanks, Toothless." She said, scratching his head, wondering how long the dragon had been there. Toothless licked her hand and purred, his big eyes sparkling. He sniffed the furs that Astrid had wrapped herself in, seeming to wonder what they were for.

All of a sudden, he grunted and spun, sitting down and facing the opposite wall.

"Toothless, what is it? What's wrong?" She asked, getting worried. He grunted again and flicked his tail toward the chair that Astrid's clothes were on. She looked back and forth from Toothless and the chair, trying to understand his meaning.

As it dawned on her, she couldn't help but laugh. Toothless was pointing to her clothes so she would get dressed, and had turned his back so she could have her privacy.

"Thank you, Toothless!" She laughed. Sensing her humor, Toothless gave an affirming nod and crooned with pleasure.

Struggling slightly due to the uncompromising state of her leg, Astrid managed to get her clothes on successfully. Tossing the furs back onto the bed, she finished buckling her skirt. Her hair, to her satisfaction, giving the events of last night, was still braided and needed only minor attention.

"Alright buddy, I'm decent now," she said, and Toothless bounded around the room happily, nudging her towards the door a couple times.

"Okay, Okay! I'm going," she mumbled, a shot of pain climbing her leg. On one of his nudges, Toothless had accidentally forced her to land her weight on the bad leg, which it did not like, and it made sure she knew of its displeasure.

Opening the door, she was surprised to find the rest of the house empty. A pang of both disappointment and immature selfishness ran through her as she realized that nobody was there watching over her. Not even Hiccup! Overcoming this feeling, she hobbled towards the front door of the house, Toothless following her carefully.

_This must be what it felt like waking up that day, with one of your feet gone. _She thought, wincing as the pain shot up her leg again.

It's a terrible feeling. Astrid admitted, now understanding a little better what Hiccup went through on a day to day basis. Swinging open the door, she decided that other than Meade Hall, it was the biggest damn door she had seen in awhile. She knew that he was called Stoick the Vast and all that, but the door made it look like the man was actually a giant. As it opened, she covered her eyes against the bright sun that was shining off a fresh layer of frost that had coated the island during the night. Must have been a cold night, because the previous day had been warm, and it had facilitated her first day of training with Hiccup and his new prosthetic.

That actually bothered her more than she had let on to him. One of the things that made Hiccup...well...Hiccup, was his prosthetic. It was a trademark of his, and to start clothing it just didn't seem like Hiccup. She hadn't liked it, but maybe she would warm up to the idea. Which was just about as likely as her warming up to the idea of marrying Snotlout. Not likely during this life.

The frost was layered on top of the hard Berk soil and tough grasses. It reflected the sun like a mirror, straight into her eyes, blinding her for a few minutes. Once she had regained her sight, she noticed that the village was deserted, not a soul working, walking or even moving.

"Where in Thor's name is everybody?" She asked the air. Ducking away from the sudden shadow, Astrid watched Toothless jump over her and land in the direction of the cliffs, his wings spread and his foot out, acting as a ladder for her to get onto him.

Complying without question, Astrid held onto his neck as he took off at a slow trot, heading towards the cliffs and the Dragon Academy. He steadily increased his speed until he was at a full bore sprint. He took the road up to the arena in just five minutes. Once they had crossed the threshold of the cliffs, Astrid gasped and found the arena surrounded by the whole town, with a few shapes in the arena. One of them was chained and buckled to the ground with more shackles than were used on dragons way back when.

Toothless purred again and Astrid got off behind a group of people, including the Twins and the rest of the Thorstons. Creeping up to

where she could listen in, Astrid maintained a silent vigil and paid close attention to the proceedings.

"...what did you do!?" It was Stoick, yelling from his throne at the head of the arena.

His demand was answered with silence.

"I don't even know who you are, but we saved your life so you better start answering some damn questions!" Stoick roared again.

And again, he was answered by silence. Judging from what the chief had said, Astrid guessed that the person in chains was the silver eyed man who had wiped her leg with that dagger, the dagger with that weird shit on it.

"I didn't want to say this now, but she's barely alive. She may even be dead. How do you feel about that? You arrived here, we saved you then you kill someone!?" Stoick was really pressing this guy. But she decided that it was time that she reveal herself. She had only spent a few minutes hiding, but she really didn't want anyone to think that she was dead.

"I'm fine!" She yelled, drawing cries of joy and attention to herself. The vikings near her swarmed over and pelted her with hugs and tears and wishes. She accepted them graciously and fought her way through to where Stoick sat, coming to stand next to him.

"Where's Hiccup?" She asked, staring at the chiefs incredulous eyes. He didn't speak, but pointed into the arena. Standing next to the silver eyed man was Hiccup, who was staring straight back at her.

"H-ho-ho-how are you walking?" Stoick stammered.

"Lets just say that is bloody hurts," Astrid said dismissively. Stoick's face grew solid again as he drew her meaning.

She nodded at Hiccup, who nodded back. Their secret pledge to see each other later was a practiced reflex that both of them understood.

The noise in the arena was quieted with a yell from Stoick as he stared at the stranger with hard eyes, "Now, start talking. If you decide to keep your tongue in your head, we'll see to it that it is removed." Stoick said, falling back into his throne. Astrid knew that he had moments of fervor and unrestrained obsession, but such a violent threat? From him that was out of the ordinary.

She got shivers when the man's silver eyes fell on her. Once again, the stark contrast between the purple headband and his eyes stuck out. The long, braided, dark hair served as a backdrop to a portrait the seemed to portray clich  evil. His eyes seemed to search her, looking deeply into her soul for something. They angled downwards from her face, slowly moving down her body and coming to rest below her belly. Then he smiled, a smile that looked both kind and wicked at the same time. It unsettled her, like the smile had more devious plans written all over it.

"YOU BETTER START SPEAKING!" Stoick roared again.

_Why is he so angry? _Astrid thought. The man was very hot-tempered, but he had mellowed over time, and anger like this is very unusual.

"Five days," the silver eyed man said.

"What does that mean?" Stoick demanded.

"Five days, _Astrid Hofferson_. Five days,"

A collective intake of breathe followed his words. Somehow, someway, he knew her name. Not just her name, but her full name. Seeing that Stoick was too caught up in thought, Astrid decided to answer,

"What about five days?" She asked tentatively.

"Five days since the night in the hall," he said.

Five days?! I haven't been out for that long! She thought frantically. She looked elsewhere, trying to find someone who could support this. Both the Twins nodded, as did Fishlegs.

Her hands and legs shaking, Astrid resolved to address this matter later.

"Who are you? Why are you here? Where did you come from? How did you know my name?" Her questions came out like water spilling from a dam. There was no rhyme or reason, she just blurted them out as they came to her mind.

"I'll make you a deal," he said calmly.

"Unshackle me, and I'll tell you everything you need to know,"

Before anyone said anything more, Astrid blurted out one more question, "At least tell me what your name is?"

His silver eyes glinted under the purple band, and he stood tall,

"Tyr Pretor."

* * *

><p>There it is! R&R and if you have an opinion of something, let me know!

6. Recoil

alright, here's chapter 6! I truly and wholeheartedly apologize for how long it took me to upload this. This semester is packed :/ but I promise I will write and update as soon and as much as I can!

Dreamworks Owns all of it!

* * *

><p>Tyr Pretor. Hiccup thought. Such an odd name. Such a

foreboding name.

He had been thinking about the man since the arena. Hiccup hadn't waited on the floor once his father adjourned the trial, but sprinted as fast as he could to see Astrid, who had fallen into the throne, exhausted. She was awake, and that was a feeling beyond any other, knowing that his angel was safe.

But with one great feeling, more questions and unknowns came into play. How had Tyr known her name? How had he known that she had been out of commission for five days? Yes, it had been five days since the hall, but Tyr had no possible way of knowing that Astrid was out for that whole time. Yet, he did. And that pulls another question up. How in Thor's name was Tyr in such a state of health after his ordeal?

Too many questions, and not enough answers. Hiccup thought again. He was sitting in the forge, a place he often used to think. Toothless was with him, and the dragon enjoyed the warmth of the furnaces, so he was almost always in a wonderfully playful mood when Hiccup was trying to think.

"Relax buddy. I need to think about stuff, okay?" Hiccup groaned.

Toothless huffed at him and flopped down in front of the main furnace. Hiccup was glad that Toothless enjoyed sleeping so much, or else it would be a big issue during times like these. The Night Fury had been much less active recently, which Hiccup attributed to the approaching winter. Most dragons went into a weird, hybrid type of sleep and hibernation during the winter months, so during the few weeks before the ice began to set in, all the dragons became much less active, and much more lethargic and sleepy.

Hiccup thought back to the days that Astrid was out cold. After she had gone into absolute hysteria, Tyr had held her down to the Hall floor. However, as soon as Stoick had freed himself from the debris that was pinning him to the wall, he'd launched himself at Tyr, tackling him and sending the two of them rolling. Then they had squared off, circling each other like wolves. He feinted to one side, and after the chief took the bait, spun and drove his left heel into Stoicks ribs, sending him barreling away. As soon as the he was out of the way, Tyr once again ran to Astrid's side and held her convulsing body down to the ground, pressing against her hip. This time though, it was Hiccup who had acted, slamming his foot into Tyr's head as hard as he could. The foot looked normal, but the steel underneath knocked him out without question.

They had rushed Astrid to the nearest home from the Hall, which was the Thorston mansion, and summoned the healer. After observing her, the healer said that the only thing they could do at this point was wait for the new fever to go down, and to see what happens.

For the first two days, Astrid stayed in the Thorston's, under constant watch. The healer visited there every day to evaluate her progress, but each day it seemed like she was getting worse.

The first day, her temperature was high. High enough that Thor himself would be neck-deep in a fever. Then it fell back down.

The second day, her temperature dropped drastically, and it stayed through the night. Then in the morning, her temperature was normal again.

The third day was the worst by far in terms of her symptoms. When the healer had arrived, with Hiccup in tow carrying things, Astrid's skin was white. Not just lighter than normal, or even pale; it was white, like the snow outside. Her pulse was almost nothing, the beats of her heart getting slower and slower with each passing day.

The healer had not allowed anyone but herself to treat the hip injury. It was one thing that the healer in Berk was famous for. She did the best surgery when she was alone, the stitches were always flawless and the wounds almost never got infected. So as to the state of that hip, nobody knew minus the healer.

The morning of the fifth day is when they pulled Tyr out of the old dragon pens and chained him up in the arena. Hiccup knew his father was on the war path. What he didn't know was why. What had his father so riled up about this situation? What had Stoick the Vast acting like any token pirate or ruffian, threatening death and yelling like a deranged idiot?

It was late afternoon now, and Hiccup had come from the arena to the forge, where he now sat. The people had been far too concerned with Astrid to bother with him for the time being. The only thing that kept Hiccup from her side was personal experience.

Astrid hated being babied by anyone, even if the intentions of the babying were good. The only way Hiccup got it done sometimes is when he could talk her into letting him, a huge achievement in and of itself.

Deciding that he was done thinking for the time being, he went back to his office to find something to do. Since the success with the foot, he had focused on getting used to it, and had no real big projects going. Something new would help him get his mind off Astrid and Tyr and crazed dragons.

Instead of a project, he found an old spear, and thought that it would be fun to restore it. The wood was rotten, so he would need a fresh shaft, but the spear head was mostly in working order, apart from some really blunt edges. Setting aside the spear shaft, he clamped the head and submerged it in fiery hot coals, deciding that re-hammering it, while taking more time and effort, would reinforce the old steel and prevent breaking or bending. It sparked as his hammer struck it, the metal being forced to bend to his will. The methodical technique relaxed him and helped him think, but sometimes his thinking took over and he got careless with his smithing.

"Dude, what the hell did you do to that thing?"

The sudden voice startled him, and he dropped the hammer on his foot, but luckily enough it was his steel foot.

"Oh Ruffnut, you scared me!" He exclaimed, his hand over his fast beating heart.

"Yeah, well that spearhead is like paper now, nice job," she said. Shaking her head, she sat down in a stool near the front

door.

"Listen Hiccup, we need to talk. About you." She said, looking at the ground.

"Yeah, fine, what do you need?" He answered, sighing. The spearhead was indeed flat like paper now, and would need an enormous amount of work to reshape.

"Marriage, Hiccup. It's getting to be a problem. You need to let the people know that you're ready to see possible wives. Normally, it would have been done two years ago, but, uh-two years ago you were-you know..."

"A screw up, I get it." he finished for her. He was afraid that either she or Tuffnut would bring this up sooner rather than later. Once a young man hit sixteen, and a woman hit seventeen in the tribe, they would go through the Thorstons and declare themselves ready to marry. Once that was done, a person who was unmarried wore a piece of jewelry to display it to the people.

Men wore a necklace or amulet while women wore a ring on their right middle finger. The gem in the piece showed what the wearers status was.

Sapphire displayed a person who was single and not courting anyone else, emerald showed a person who was currently courting, and ruby showed someone who was in marriage negotiations. Right now, Berk was filled with young men and women who all wore sapphires on the jewelry.

Hiccup knew that he was a hot commodity for young girls who wanted to have the, and he hated this name, First Dragon Rider all to themselves.

"Ruffnut, why is it a problem? Just because I don't want to marry yet doesn't mean I'm...dysfunctional. What about Astrid, or Fishlegs? They don't wear anything."

She sighed again, "Hiccup, Fishlegs declared himself a year and a half ago. His fingers are so big that we didn't have anything to fit. Astrid has been declared. For a long time. She may not even know it."

She may not know it? Hiccup thought suspiciously. That didn't make sense. He of all people should know that she wore no jewelry, nor had any to speak of.

"How would that be?" He asked, not looking at Ruffnut and faking indifference to the subject. He was VERY interested in this subject.

"When she was younger, maybe as far back as twelve or thirteen, her dad took her through the declaration process but kept her blind to the real purpose of it. She thought that this was all part of getting a fancy ring to wear, which was true, but she had no clue as to the real reasons behind it," Ruffnut stopped for a second, maybe waiting for a reaction, then continued, "Because they were poor, her father wanted her to get swooped up by some of the richer families who also married their children that young. He wanted the best for her, and

thought that if he married her out early, she could enjoy as much of her life as possible,"

Hiccup had stopped what he was doing and was listening intently.

"Ruffnut, how do you know this? You're a year younger than her," Hiccup interjected.

"My parents told me all this when they saw that me and Astrid had become friends. Anyway, Soon after the process was done and the ring had been made, Astrid's father died. He had not told her mother about this plan of his because her mom would have never let it happen. The ring went unpaid for, and it was never given to her. Because she gets so depressed about her dad's death, she completely forgot the fancy ring she was supposed to get." Ruffnut finished.

"Ruffnut, you probably know this already, knowing your particular talent, but I'm going to marry Astrid. There it is, so I won't be declaring anything anytime soon." Hiccup said, final decision ringing in his voice.

Ruffnut stood up , "Well, happy day, you finally said it. That's all I need, I'll let my parents know that they can start marriage planning, so we'll ne-"

"Not yet, Ruffnut. Not getting married yet. There are some things I have to prepare,"

She nodded and walked off into the golden, late afternoon light outside.

"Oh, Ruffnut, one more thing!" Hiccup yelled.

"Yeah, what is it?" She called back.

"That ring! Destroy it!" He yelled.

"Alright," She answered, and continued walking.

Hiccup was sure that he didn't want some symbol of her cruel past lurking in the village. He doused the furnaces and cleaned up the ruined spear.

He heard Toothless gurgle as his hot furnace became cold. The dragon lumbered sleepily outside to where Hiccup stood waiting for him.

"Well, good afternoon, Mr. Sleepy. Time to get you home," Hiccup laughed.

Once Toothless was slumbering in Hiccups room, he set out for the arena once more. Through all the days excitement, he still had a class to teach for a few new riders. This newest batch were a promising group, with one or two really talented recruits, but at the same time, they _all_ had giant egos.

On more than one occasion Hiccup had needed to break up a fight between them because if one said something sly, the others usually reacted the same way. Once they did, it didn't dissolve as a joke,

but continued escalating into full-blown insults and attacks. Once it got there, it was only a matter of time before fists began to fly.

To counter this, Hiccup had their classes either early in the morning or late afternoon, so he could give it his full attention and focus. Climbing the path up to where the arena was nestled, Hiccup regretted not having Toothless. The steep, winding trail was a difficult task for any person to do, made only worse by the much heavier foot that he now wore.

Walking into the arena, Hiccup was glad that all seven students had made it there on time. They were clustered into a group, talking vividly about something.

"...NO! Why are you so stupid? The guy clearly wanted to kill people!" One of the young girls, named Miri, yelled.

"Miri, shut up. If he wanted to kill people, he would have, no doubt about it," another girl said dismissively. Miri was easily the most dramatic of this class, and the girl who had answered her was by far the most down to earth. Her name was Gemeye, and she was an orphan from some far away place. She had come a few weeks ago after hearing about the academy, and had made a home for herself on Berk.

"But Gemeye! Why would they put him in shackles and stuff if he wasn't dangerous?"

"They put him in shackles because he almost killed someone," Hiccup called, approaching them.

"HA! See? He was trying to kill people!" Miri yelled triumphantly, jabbing a finger at Gemeye, who rolled her eyes.

"Wasn't Miss Astrid here today though?" One of the boys asked.

"Yeah, she was. I don't know how, but- wait, Miss Astrid? Since when is she Miss Astrid?" Hiccup asked.

"We've all called her Miss Astrid since we began learning here," Gemeye said. She showed Hiccup and, in fact, any of the teachers the utmost respect and attention. She was the most talented of anyone that Hiccup had taught at the academy, ever.

"Well, regardless, she was here today, but that's a conversation for another time," Hiccup said, "Time to get to the lesson!"

The students groaned and huffed as they stood in a line, facing him. It had become a kind of unspoken custom and law that the students stood in a line, rather than lay about.

"OK then! What did we cover last time?" Hiccup asked, looking at each one of them expectantly.

"Well...something about Nightmares...", A boy named Vrack mumbled, looking at the sky.

"How to successfully calm a Nightmare using either food or actions, how to get a Nightmare to do something without disrespecting it, and

what to do and what not to do when confronted with a mad Nightmare," Gemeye rattled off. _Flawless._ Hiccup thought proudly.

"Good. Now today, we talk more about what not to do. What did I say were things that could be done?"

"Well, you can go with the regular approach and act calmly toward it, and should it recognize that act, it will calm down," Miri said.

"Or you can attempt to overpower it, while not recommended, it works," a large boy named Plod called.

"That's really about it. Good." Hiccup said.

"Now, what do you if a Nightmare gets mad?" He asked. As he thought, the group remained silent, shuffling their feet and avoiding his eyes.

"Run away?" Gemeye suggested.

"Gemeye, this is a dragon academy, why the hell would you _run away_?" Vrack jeered. She shot a glance down the line at him, "Ok then, what the hell would you do, smartass?"

"Say that again to my face!" He yelled back.

Stomping up to him, her face close to his, Gemeye said, "What. Would. You. Do. Smart. Ass?" Each word was said by itself, which seemed to infuriate Vrack even more.

"What would I do, Gemeye? Well, anything is better than running away like a pathetic orphan!" he yelled back at her.

The words had struck a chord deep inside Gemeye. As soon as the words emerged from Vrack's gullet, her fists and jaw clenched and her eyes began to water.

"Aww, you gonna cry?" Vrack crooned with mock sympathy. Gemeye kept her face inches from his, clearly fighting the urge to do something rash.

"Stop it you two. That's enough." Hiccup said, attempting to sound commanding. Gemeye stalked back to her place in line and stood stock still.

"Well then, getting back to what we were talking about, Vrack what would you do?" he asked.

"Well, the first thing to do would be to jump onto the dragon and gain control of the horns, then once that's done you ca-"

"Get burnt to a crisp?"

"WHO SAID THAT!?" Vrack roared.

"I did, now shut up, you're too loud," Astrid said, strolling into the ring.

Hiccup had to gasp as he watched her. Even in the dimming sun, her hair shone. Her slender body flowed like water, her subtle curves

peeking out, like they were playing games with him.

"You have the entirely wrong idea; running away would be better than your plan," Astrid continued.

Vrack looked like he was going to pop. The boys ego was giant as he was, and it had just been rattled. Hiccup waited for the decisive move, any little action that would bring about his thrashing. If anyone was dumb enough to challenge Astrid, it was Vrack. If anyone could possibly beat her, it was Vrack.

"...Fine then." He mumbled.

"Alright, class over, I'll see you all in here again in two days." Hiccup said, crossing his arms in front of his chest.

"But, We've barely done anything!" Miri whined.

"Sorry Miri, but there's more important things to be done right now. So go home and relax." Hiccup said to the girl as she pouted.

The students all left, grumbling about wasting their time and this and that and whatever. Astrid leaned against a near wall until the last of them had disappeared and dove at Hiccup. He caught her in a tight embrace as their lips met in a deep and emotional kiss.

"How are you? What happened? Why are you walking? How are you walking? When did you wake up? Why are yo-" She placed a soft hand over his mouth and wrapped her arms around him. He understood and held her tight for as long as she wanted him to. They stayed like that for ten minutes before she finally let go. Hiccup's shirt had a damp spot from her silent tears.

"I was so scared. I didn't know what was gonna happen that night, and then Tyr and the dagger and the pain..."

"Shhh Astrid, I'm here and you're gonna be OK," he crooned, stroking her hair softly.

"Astrid, what did you say to him today? You two spoke after the trial didn't you?"

"Yeah, we did. It was weird at first because I stood there and just looked at him. I didn't know what to say," She said slowly, her eyes droopy and tired.

"Well tell me what happened then. I want to hear everything, every detail," he answered, sitting down and pulling her against him.

She smiled and cuddled into him, "Well OK, but I warn you, a few things were really weird. Still not sure if I believe them."

"That's OK. I said everything and I meant everything," Hiccup answered.

* * *

><p>There it is! R & R!<p>

7. Subtle Truths

Once again, I apologize for how long its taking me to update. **I do not own it**. **Dreamworks does**

* * *

><p>Astrid sat alone in Meade Hall, waiting for Stoick and the others to filter everyone out. She had requested that her conversation with Tyr be private, just her and him. The request had been met with astounding resistance, but Astrid was more stubborn than an ox and eventually won out. She was sure that the people would be right outside the Hall, ready to spring to action, should anything fishy happen anyway.<p>

She heard the large doors creak open and in walked the silver eyed Tyr.

He walked over to the table and sat down, silently, watching her intently.

"How fares that hip?" He asked in his deep voice.

"It's fine...I guess. No idea how, but it feels and looks like it did before the dragon..." She mumbled, still unsure of what she wanted to say.

To her relief, Tyr just sat there, not saying anything, not fidgeting like she was, but just sitting and waiting patiently. He did not have a hard look on his face, but rather a soft, friendly look, like he hadn't almost killed her.

"Tyr, that dagger...what was on it? Why did it do...that? Why did it hurt so much?" she asked expectantly.

He sighed despite his facial expression not changing, "The substance on the dagger is a medicinal paste that I prepared for serious wounds. As for you passing out, that's how the medicine works, if it works at all. Obviously though, the medicine worked," he said, eyeballing her hip.

"Well then, how did you know my name? How did you know that I'd been out for five whole days?" she asked. As the minutes passed, the tide of questions that she had before was beginning to rise again.

"I wasn't unconscious the day you found me, so that's how I knew your names. In terms of knowing how long you were passed out for, I'm well aware of the effects of my medicine and there were only two options when you passed out: Either you were out for five days while the medicine worked, or it killed you. Seeing as your chief had not executed me, I guessed that the former was correct." He answered, his eyes never leaving hers.

"So, now for the big question. How in Thor's name did you get here, where did you come from and why were you the only one on that ship." She finished, settling in for a long explanation.

Tyr sighed and laid both his hands on the table, "OK, you're going to have to promise me that you will just listen because some of this is

going to seem so outlandish that I may seem crazy."

She nodded and he sat back, "OK then, to answer the first question. I come from far away. VERY far away. I was born on an island much like yours, but when my people left, we sailed North for a full year, stopping only when we needed to for food and other such provisions. When we finally settled on an island not terribly far from here, I saw a change in them. My people had changed from peaceful, kind villagers into warmongers and killers. I was orphaned when, during a bloody coup, my parents were killed. The new chief attempted to keep me as his personal executioner. I wished to leave them because I had lost everything, so I stole a ship and sailed off on my own. After three weeks at sail, I was caught in that storm, and I ended up in your healers lodge."

He looked at her expectantly, like that was all he was going to say, "Is that all?" Astrid droned.

"That is all you need to know," He said solidly, with almost no emotion.

"Tell me something, Astrid," he said, his voice getting a bit sterner than it already was, which was hard to believe, "Are you people violent, _at all_?"

Astrid thought for a moment, "Well, we used to fight the dragons, but other than that, not terribly violent. We've never been at war with anyone."

Tyr nodded, his eyes dropping to the the surface of the table, clearly calculating or pondering something.

"I forgot to thank you for this," he said, tapping his head.

"Thank me for what? I didn't give you anything?"

"You didn't give it to me, I took it." he replied. Astrid searched his head for anything that could possibly be hers, and her eyes fell on the headband. The purple cloth that had been..._stolen_... from her home.

Before she thought about, Astrid lashed out and punched Tyr on his right cheek.

Tyr didn't say anything, but his eyes just bored into her, looking extremely annoyed.

"Why were you in my house!?" she shrieked.

He looked at her from from the seat he was in, looking ready to defend himself, "I suppose you're right; I deserved that punch. I was there because I was nosing around and found your house, so I decided to nose around a little more and I ended up leaving with more than I entered with." he explained. Astrid was still a bit fired up about the discovery, but its not like anything severe happened. He could have done so much more than he did. He could have killed her and burnt the house to the ground if he wanted to, but he didn't, so there was no real harm done.

His renewed silence made Astrid feel a pang of guilt for the way they

had been treating him. Technically speaking, Tyr had saved her life. There was the pain, there was the breaking into her house, but when the day was over, she was only alive because of him.

She felt his pain a bit in regards to his story because her father was a bit violent, even if he didn't mean it. Sometimes the man would hit her and her mother, and call them names and treat them like dirt, and more than a few times Astrid had wanted to take a ship and leave; just leave. Give no reason, no indication, but just to leave the island forever. Then her father died, and Astrid knew that she needed to be there for her mother and brother.

"Well listen, just lay low for awhile and I'll talk to the right people," she mumbled. She was going straight to Hiccup, not anyone else. In her mind, Hiccup had a huge influence with the villagers, despite his father being the one with the title of chief. The boy always had the towns best interests in mind, and Astrids interests in his heart. She sat there, deep in thought when she sighted Tyr walking towards the great doors.

"Tyr!" She called after him. He turned and fixed a silvery eye on her, not saying anything.

"Thanks." She said awkwardly. She had never actually thanked the man for what he did.

He simply nodded and silently left the Hall.

* * *

><p>"That's all? He didn't say anything more?" Hiccup asked with an exasperated tone.<p>

"That's all. He isn't very talkative or emotional. His voice doesn't seem to change much," Astrid confirmed. It was a terrible truth that they two now had to deal with. Hiccup had told her that his father expected them to take responsibility for Tyr, but that was before the whole event with the dragon.

"So what are we going to do, Hiccup?" She asked, trying to establish a plan of action.

"I really don't know, Astrid. We don't know a single thing about the guy apart from what he told you, and what we've seen. We need to try and discover his personality and his demeanor first," Hiccup replied.

Astrid agreed with him mostly, but she hadn't told him about Tyr's apparent mercy when she was vulnerable. She thought that Tyr just might be friendlier than the village was making him seem.

"Astrid! How's your hip? It can't be feeling great." Hiccup suddenly exclaimed.

"Hiccup, Hiccup, wait. My hip is fine. Just sore is all," she said reassuringly. "I'll just need to work with it and get back my strength. Really it's fine!" she continued.

Hiccup eyed her, concern etched on his face. Astrid took his momentary lack of initiative to plant a kiss on his lips, holding the

contact for several delicious seconds. Before she could break away though, he wrapped his arms around her waist and pulled her on top of him, kissing harder than before. She gleefully returned the gesture, trying to incite his tongue into a wrestling match by licking his lips every few moments.

She moaned when he finally opened his mouth and let her tongue inside. She felt his hands creeping up her legs and under her skirt, and she didn't resist him. Opportunities like this were few and far between for the two young lovers, so bad hip or not, they were going to take advantage of it. He kept going and she was already on her way to get under his shirt when a deep voice interrupted them,

"I wouldn't do that if I were you," Tyr said, stepping out from the shadows of the arena. Astrid whimpered and rolled off Hiccup, who sat up furiously, "What are you talking about?" he asked quickly, awkwardly.

"Her hip is going to be as hot as coals where that gash was; you'll burn yourself if you touch it." he said, not moving and watching the two of them intently.

Astrid stood up carefully, "How long have you been here?" Kind of an off topic question for the circumstances, but a question nonetheless.

"Since I left the Hall." he answered. His face was still hard and emotionless, but he was talking at least.

Astrid gave Hiccup a look of concern and helplessness. What could they say? How on earth could they try and get Tyr to open up?

"Well...uh...why didn't you show yourself earlier?" Hiccup asked slowly, forming the question as he asked it.

"I prefer to be silent," Tyr replied curtly.

"Well, we can see that," Hiccup groaned. Astrid tried to stifle a giggle at his sarcasm and failed miserably.

"I thought you may need to know about the abnormal temperature of the skin around your scar, Astrid." Tyr said as he slinked away into the growing shadows.

Astrid may have felt even more hopeless after another seemingly fruitless conversation with the mysterious man, but her mind was buzzing with joy and anticipation.

As soon as Tyr was out of sight, she exploded, "Did you see it!? Did you see it?!" she squeaked.

Hiccup watched her like a viking watching mead run out the keg, "See what? What has you so excited?" he asked.

"Tyr, Hiccup! I thought he was emotionless and stoic and weird! When you said that we can see that he prefers to be silent, it was small and insignificant, but he smiled!"

Astrid had no idea why this fact excited her so much. It was the

truth. After Hiccups sarcasm, Astrid thought that she would be the only one laughing, but she had caught Tyr smiling! It was a breakthrough.

"So what, he smiled a bit. What's the big deal?" Hiccup asked, his voice strained and tired.

"The big deal is that at least Tyr isn't completely...different. He at least knows what is funny, and that gives us a good deal more information than we had before." she quipped. Her enthusiasm drained quickly though, as her eyes began to droop.

"I guess there is no chance of continuing our activities from before?" Hiccup asked, giving her a sly look.

Astrid returned his grin, "Well, maybe somewhere more...comfortable," And with a wink, she grabbed his hand and they began a slow walk down the mountain.

Their planned attempts to be silent failed as they fell through the door of the forge, kissing and grabbing with a vengeance. It wasn't long before Astrid's shoulder pads clanged onto the floor and her skirt soon followed, leaving her wearing only her woolen clothes.

The pair tumbled through the forge, running into walls and falling over chairs, but they never stopped trying to remove each others clothes. Finding their way to Hiccups office and the little cot that was there, they pulled the furs over themselves, their naked bodies stinging from the cold.

There, they kept kissing and touching each other with the passion of long separated lovers. Astrid could feel Hiccups hands caressing her skin, feeling like the softest velvet.

"Ouch!" Hiccup yelled.

"What!? What is it?" Astrid panted. The long kissing and mad rush for the cot had left her breathless.

Hiccup swung out of the bed, lit a small candle and showed her his hand. It was singed red and blistering in a few places.

"Wow," Astrid mumbled. Tyr had warned them that her hip would be blazing hot, but she had thought that he was being apocalyptic and annoying, but he was right. Hiccup had burned himself on her skin!

"Why can't I feel it if it's so hot?" Astrid wondering aloud.

"Astrid, I think that it's just your skin that's so hot; I touched your hip plenty of times when we still had clothes on, and it felt normal," Hiccup said contemplatively. With that, he got up and walked bravely into the forge.

She thought he was brave because he was still naked, and it was cold, very cold. Astrid could feel the toned muscles in his arms and back, but to her and only her, he was a sight to behold while wearing nothing. She loved how his skinny back was layered with muscle and

how he had not a single shred of wasted flesh. Every bit of him was either muscle or bone and his arms, while still spindly, were also lean and knew exactly how to work her into a frenzy.

Walking back into the office, Hiccup pulled Astrid out from under the furs and wrapped her hip with a bandage, being careful to not touch the skin again.

When he was done, he placed his good hand on it, "That's better. It's still hot, but not burning," He said, and slid back under the furs with her. They lay there for hours, their previous lust changed into a romantic urge to just be with each other. Astrid felt that they had been apart for far too long and cherished their time together. Soon, she fell into a deep sleep, keeping her body warm next to his.

* * *

><p>The next morning, Astrid woke up under the warm furs, and to her surprise, Hiccup was still there, slumbering soundly. She sighed contently and snuggled up to his side, longing to bathe herself in his warmth.<p>

For the first night in a long time, she had gone the full night without seeing part of her dream about the village, and the destruction of it. Her nights in the medicinal coma had been chaotic. Her dreams had vaulted between the destruction of the village, repeated attempts to discover the identity of the blood covered man, and a new segment of the dream that involved the deaths of several people that she did not know. She had watched in horror as the unknown man sliced them down with bloodthirsty ease. It had frightened her, but she had no time to contemplate what that might mean.

"Why good morning beautiful," Hiccup said as he leaned over to kiss her lovely hair.

"Good morning," she said back, kissing his neck.

They made small talk until a voice rang through the forge, "Hiccup! You in here?"

Of all people, it was Gemeye who was there, looking for him.

"Oh crap, what do I do? What do I do?" Hiccup stammered.

"Go out there and talk to her!" Astrid whispered.

"Naked?! My clothes are out there!" He whispered back furiously.

Astrid flopped her head back and groaned. Hiccup, the glorious idiot, and left all his clothes out in the forge. That was when she realized that she was a glorious idiot as much as he was. If her memory was not tricking her, her armored skirt and shoulder pads were right next to the door!

"Hiccup, you need to get her to go outside or something. We can't do anything with her in here!" Astrid whispered again.

Hiccup scoffed and then placed a finger over his lips, "Gemeye! Can

you wait outside? I'll be there in a minute!" He yelled.

Astrid listened closely as she heard Gemeye rattle something, then they heard the door close. In a flurry, Hiccup jumped out of the bed and scampered out into the forge. A minute later, he returned, his arms full of clothes and metal armor.

"Ok, well I'll see you later!" He said quickly. He gave her a quick peck and ran back outside. She heard him greet Gemeye and listened as their voices faded, leaving her in silence once more.

Figuring that she better get dressed and leave before anyone else came to the forge, namely Gobber, and catch her there, naked in Hiccups cot. She lifted the furs and rolled her legs out from under them. The bandage Hiccup had fixed on her hip was still on, and Astrid decided to leave it that way if another wonderful opportunity came upon them. She donned her wool clothes and shoulder pads, then gave all her attention to the skirt. Fastening the last buckle, she strode out of the office and into the forge.

Once there, she swayed a bit as her head got dizzy and hazy. She was experiencing some heavy deja vu, because she could picture the curtain being ripped and broken, the walls of the forge falling out, and she found herself staring at the image from her dream.

She shook her head violently to get the image to leave. It brought on her worst fears at that time, which was losing the village, losing her loved ones, and most of all, losing Hiccup. He was everything to her, and without him, it seemed pointless to wake up every day.

Once her head cleared, she made her way outside to meet the day. Opening the door, she was stunned to find a bright, bright sun shining down on the island and to find the people milling about avidly. Luckily, nobody turned a suspicious eye on her and why she was coming out of the forge in the morning, so she took the chance to remove herself from there. Walking along the main road that went through the square, Astrid was happy to find that life was proceeding as normal.

Men were hauling in the mornings catch, mothers were hauling their kids off to school, hauling lazy teenage sons and daughters out of bed, hauling in washing and generally going about their days work. She sighted Hiccup walking down on the docks with Gemeye, and he was describing something to her avidly using his hands. Walking back up to her house, Astrid was happy and terrified to see that her mother was still home this morning.

"And where were you last night young lady?" Her mother asked. It was the type of question in which your answer determined your fate.

"Uh...I was...um...I was with Azure?" Astrid mumbled. She was caught as soon as the words left her mouth.

"Azure hasn't moved in two days, Astrid. Now you should know damn well better than to do something as foolish as staying out all night after your injury! I was worried sick that that madman had kidnapped you to finish the job! Don't you ever do that to me again, you hear?" her mother screamed. Despite her wonderful night, Astrid knew she would get the third-degree from her mother. Despite having been on

Berk for nineteen seasons, Astrid was still subject to her mothers wrath.

"Astrid, you might be a young lady now. I know you've tried to be strong since your father's passing. I know that you've got responsibilities as a dragon trainer, but you're still my Astrid. I thought I lost you too and I would hate for that to happen." Her mother said, more tenderly.

Astrid hugged her mother, "I know mom. I'm sorry." She mumbled, and went off to find her brother so she could take him to the Elders lodge. No matter what happened, Astrid always had her family.

* * *

><p>And there it is! R&R and tell me how it is!<p>

8. Shike!

Here is Chapter 8! Hope you like it :)

Dreamworks owns all orginial names, titles and other relevant ish!

* * *

><p>Hiccup had silently berated himself all day for leaving the forge. As soon as he closed the door behind him, he wished that he'd stayed in bed with Astrid. Gemeye was standing outside the door, looking at him with a tilted head, "Why did you sleep in the forge?" She asked him.<p>

He scratched his head trying to think of a viable excuse. "Well, I had a project to finish for Gobber, and then it was too late so I just slept here." He said, hoping that she would take the bait.

"Alright then I guess. Gobber has you do some crazy projects huh? This is the fifth time I've seen you leaving the forge in the morning,"

Gemeye rambled on about being sorry for her acting at the arena the day before and why she shouldn't have responded so badly to Vricks taunt and blah blah blah. Hiccup was more glad that she hadn't identified Astrid's clothing laying around inside the forge. If she had though, she hid it well.

Hiccup had flushed red a bit when she mentioned five times that Gemeye had seen him leave the forge. Every single time, Astrid had been with him, and when she mentioned it, he recalled all those wonderful nights and their...sweaty beginnings.

"So, you just want to apologize for your behavior? Gemeye, it's fine, really. Tempers flare sometimes. Vrack was out of line too, so don't worry about it," He reassured her.

He didn't really see it as necessary that she be the one to come and explain herself. She was the one who had been in the right of the whole situation. Hiccup was more hoping that Vrack would come and

speak for his actions, but apparently, that was not forthcoming.

Walking along next to his student, Hiccup decided that he might as well get to know her better, "So, why exactly does that hurt you so much? I mean, not trying to be offensive or anything, but why does the fact that you are indeed an orphan bother you?"

The girl rubbed her temples and sighed. She looked really tired.

"With all due respect, Hiccup, how would you feel if someone killed Toothless and people poked fun or insulted at you about it?" she said softly.

Hiccup recoiled at her words, "Wait...they're dead? Gemeye...I'm so sorry...I didn't kno-"

"It's fine. The Valkyr took them to Valhalla earlier than I would have liked." she said, unwaveringly.

Vrack really pulled a nasty one. Hiccup thought to himself. Of course, Vrack had no way of knowing that Gemeye's parents were dead, nor that she was an orphan of her own choosing.

"Still, I'm sorry...so, why do you look so tired this morning?" Hiccup ventured, trying to get off the somber topic of those long past.

Judging ffrom her brighter eyes and straighter back, Hiccup guessed that Gemeye appreciated his changing of the topic, "Well, you know how mead gets more delicious after a few mugs?" She said, smiling wryly.

Hiccup laughed, "Yes, I most certainly do,"

"Lets just say I had a few more than a few mugs last night," she said, massaging her head again.

Hiccup was still laughing when she continued, "And from what I've heard, I did some pretty embarrassing things," She mumbled again.

Hiccup could only imagine what those things were. There were certain things that teenage vikings girls did when they were filled with drink, and many of them involved the removal of clothes. Gemeye was not a bad looking female, and even though nobody compared to Astrid, Hiccup wouldn't have minded seeing some of Gemeye's drunken exploits.

A year ago, he cringed when a girl even talked to him. He had been a timid little deer then, freezing as soon as eyes were fixed on him. His major maturation in that year had led him to be a more adventurous and sometimes...risky individual. So when it came to women and drink, he was very interested.

"Well then, I guess you should go and sleep," Hiccup suggested to her.

She shook her head, "No, I can't do that. I've got work to do. Need

to study more on feeding and grooming techniques for Nadders. If I don't rememb-

"Gemeye. Listen to me. You will never learn to ride a dragon that way. Studying only goes so far with dragons. You need to get up there and ride one." He said, smiling as he finished. She was the first of the recruits to actually get an offer to ride.

Her face and eyes lit up and she looked ready to pop, "Really!? I mean...Really?! I can go riding with you guys!?" she shook with excitement.

"Hold on. Not now you can't. The dragons are about to go into hibernation. Next season though. You'll go on our first ride, with all the other teachers." Hiccup declared proudly.

The girl jumped on Hiccup, wrapping her arms around his shoulders in a tight hug. Not being prepared for it, Hiccup's first instinct was to try and catch the girl, and that effort landed his hands a little farther down her back than he would have liked.

She, however, didn't seem to mind that her teachers hands rested on her buttocks and held him close in the hug. As soon as he possibly could, Hiccup broke the contact, hoping that nobody had seen it.

"So...sorry," he mumbled, embarrassed.

Gemeye smiled, "It's alright, Hiccup. I don't mind," she said with a wink.

Hiccup knew instantly from her tone and body language that she was being coy. Astrid had done the same thing many times to him.

He blushed and said goodbye to the girl, deciding to go back home and see what the state of his house was.

As he walked, Hiccup's mind raced. What had he done to bring on the wholly unexpected situation? Astrid was the only girl he'd ever thought about, and the only girl that actually gave him a chance. Now, not only did he have Astrid in his bed, but he had Gemeye, a very pretty girl, flirting with him. It was exceptionally dangerous, but the whole deal sort of...excited him.

Shaking his head, he knew that he shouldn't be that way, but he couldn't help it. He would have to deal with this soon, and fast. There was no telling what wrath he could face if this continued.

Hearing a commotion, he turned off the main road and onto a small foot path that led just behind a large barn. Coming round the corner, he bore witness to the start of the weekly wrestling matches.

Since they weren't allowed to kill dragons anymore, the warriors of Berk had settled for a village wide wrestling bracket. Each week, whoever wanted to could wrestle for a prize. That prize could be a basket of fish, could be a big hunk of bread, whatever the village had extra. Since its founding, the wrestling had become very popular and often featured a couple dozen matches per week.

The rules were simple. Whoever gave up first was the loser. Fights could range in length from a few minutes to almost half an hour at times.

Walking over, Hiccup saw that as usual, his father officiated in the ring while Gobber was on hand to handle any light medical issues. It was organized by the Thorstons, whose aptitude for books and records made them perfect for the job.

As he approached the ring, intent on watching for awhile, Hiccup spied a welcome sight. Tyr was sitting on a few bales of hay behind the crowd.

Taking his opportunity to maybe converse with him for the first time, Hiccup ambled over, "Mind if I sit with you?" He asked, trying not to sound completely terrified. He was.

Tyr shook his head, and Hiccup climbed up to sit next to him. The man had picked well, the view from the bales was astoundingly good. It had a view of the whole ring, minus when Stoick stood in front of them and they couldn't see anything at all.

The first fight started and the two men circled each other like wolves at the kill. Once they locked, the position battle began as the pushed and pulled to gain favorable openings.

"Can you wrestle?" Tyr asked, surprising Hiccup. He had thought that he would be the one starting conversation, but he wasn't complaining.

"I would like to say that I could, but I'm not exactly normal," Hiccup said.

"I would have been more surprised if you said you could wrestle," Tyr droned. Hiccup gave the man a sidelong look, "And what does that mean?"

"That foot of yours doesn't allow you to move well, does it?" Tyr said, his voice the same, calculated tone and volume.

"My foot? What's wrong with my foot?" Hiccup said indignantly.

"Don't play dumb; I felt something remarkably similar to steel when I was kicked in the head at the Hall. Your left foot is a prosthesis isn't it?" The man never looked away from the fights while he spoke.

"Yeah, it's a prosthesis. Solid steel, and I made it big enough to put a boot on," Hiccup sighed in defeat.

"You're a blacksmith?" Tyr actually looked at Hiccup this time.

"Yeah. Been apprenticed to Gobber since I was a boy." Hiccup said, happy that he had something to brag about.

"I wouldn't mind seeing your forge. My people were not smiths, and any weapons we used were crude at best." Tyr said, his voice only raising a little bit from before. He had turned back to the matches,

and he watched them intently.

"Can you wrestle, Tyr?" Hiccup asked, gaining more confidence.

Tyr shrugged, "I can hold my own," he said, his eyes flashing between two opponents who had just had a particularly interesting exchange. Hiccup was on fire. He had discovered that not only can Tyr wrestle, but he cannot forge weaponry. An interesting fact, seeing as almost every tribe Hiccup knew of had at least one famous smith, or if not could at least forge decently.

"Seperate!" Hiccup heard his father yell at two large women who were grappling in the ring.

"Do any of you young ones wrestle here?" Tyr asked.

"Well, yeah. Snotlout and Astrid do. I would like to, but I'm too spindly and this foot prevents me from even trying." Hiccup said, patting his prosthetic. He had wanted to try his luck in the ring, but he couldn't move nearly as fast as he needed to. He had tried to wrestle with Astrid when they were alone, but half the time they ended up ripping each others clothes off instead.

"I can teach you to wrestle with that." Tyr mentioned with a glance at Hiccup's foot.

"What? How do you know how to wrestle with a prosthetic?" Hiccup asked suspiciously. Why he was suspicious, he didn't really know.

"My father was like you. Except his entire leg was a prosthetic. He lost it fighting with a dragon," Tyr said, rubbing his knuckles, which had a line of scars across them.

"Your dad fought with a dragon and lost his leg? Which kind of dragon?" Hiccup asked, appalled that any dragons near Berk would try to kill innocent people.

"It was not here. During our long migration from our original home, a dragon that looked very much akin to a demon attacked our ships. It burned many of them with a bluish inferno and the air stank of burning flesh and rang with the cries of those in terminal pain. Somehow, my father managed to shoot it out of the sky with a bow. The arrow he fired had ripped its tail, and it could no longer fly. Once it had fallen, the beast reared again and began to attack with fangs and claws. My father squared off with it and fought it, toe to toe, but he had his leg bitten off," Tyr seemed to lose himself in memory as he told Hiccup this story, his eyes looked mystical as they glossed over in thought.

"He managed to pin the creature's foot to the ground with a sword as it tore his leg from his body. The other sailors killed it, skinned it, and presented the skin to my father as a trophy. We could not understand why it attacked us in broad daylight. It was as if this demon was driven by some enormous instinct to attack us. But yes, my father wore a prosthetic, as you do now, and I know how to live and work in harmony with it."

Hiccup thought furiously about what dragon could possibly be so violent, vicious and downright hellish. None of the dragons he knew

of would do such a thing, especially to sailors at sea.

"What color was it? Do you remember anything about it?" He asked, fearing the answer.

Tyr closed his eyes and looked troubled, "I do not remember specifics about it, it was a dark afternoon and I couldn't see well, but I remember its eyes. An acidic green, almost like bile from the worst sickness."

"How can you possibly hope to identify a dragon just by its eyes?" Hiccup scoffed.

He froze as Tyr fixed a steely gaze upon him, "You watch a family member have their limbs torn off, and you will always remember the image of the beast that did it." He said in a somber, apocalyptic tone. Hiccup hushed himself and watched the fights in silence, fearing that he would offend Tyr any more than he already had. Lucky for him though, it wasn't long before the silence was broken again.

"So, do you want to learn how to use that foot?" Tyr asked.

Hiccup had noticed the mans almost defiant manner. He hadn't once gotten flustered, embarrassed or even stuttered, as people normally do around strangers. His words had always been steady and sure and they were free of the fear of ridicule or mock. Of course, Tyr didn't look like someone that would be lightly toyed with on a whim.

Hiccup assumed that it would take a healthy share of guts and stupidity to mess with Tyr. His serious and downright scary disposition warded off all those who might make stupid comments or who would foolishly instigate confrontation.

"Well, yeah I do. But, Astrid is...um...was training me," Hiccup stammered.

"Bring her along. No doubt she could use some help re-adjusting her hip." Tyr said.

Hiccup hopped off the bales and almost crashed when he forgot to compensate for his foot. He cursed himself for being so clumsy and quickly returned to a balanced state.

"You said you wanted to see the forge right?" He asked.

Tyr nodded and descended from the hay himself. Hiccup led the man through the various streets and oaths that led to the large but humble forge. Hiccup stopped outside the door, "Can you just wait here? I have to check something," he said. He was wondering if Astrid was still in bed.

"I don't think your teacher is here anymore," Tyr droned.

"Eh? What's that?" Hiccup asked, swinging around.

"Well, look. There is a whole flurry of footprints where we just came from, so they are yours from when you were last here and mine. We walked back over those same footprints, but there is another set of footprints headed off in that direction." He said, pointing up

towards a group of houses.

"True." Hiccup said and he opened the door to the forge. He had been a bit befuddled when Tyr said his teacher was no longer there. He had been about to say that it was actually Astrid, but stopped himself. Tyr streak of always being spot on and correct had been revealed to be good information, not omnipotent power. A sobering revelation for Hiccup.

Tyr walked around the forge, his eyes taking in all the walls of weaponry, tools and things in between. His eyes grew wide as he gazed upon the giant battle axes and hammers that were preferred by many of the vikings. He drew a single finger across the blades, marveling at the smooth, thick steel.

"How do you make such things? The amount of work seems immeasurable. Where do you even get the ore?" He asked, his voice an entirely different pitch than it had been before.

Smiling, Hiccup lifted the lid of a nearby crate and showed Tyr the mounds of pure ore inside of it. The lumps had been painstakingly mined from caves all over Berk and the nearby islands, and it provided a valuable trade commodity.

"We mine it all over the place. Mining it isn't the hard part though, its smelting the stuff into metal. Takes hours and hours to get it right." Hiccup replied. Tyr looked like a child, his eyes wide and darting.

"The things we used back home barely compare. I was surprised when I heard that you were a blacksmith, but I must say that I am in awe of the weapons you have here," Tyr said, his face still blank with curiosity.

Hiccup decided to pry a little further into Tyr's past, "Tyr, you said you used weapons back with your people, right?"

"We did,"

"Well, what did you wield? I mean, there are only a few weapons that could really be helpful to keep around, and I'm sure we have them." Hiccup said, curiosity painting his own face.

Tyr looked at every weapon in the forge, "No, you don't have it here, or you don't have it on the walls." He answered. Hiccup's shoulders drooped. That would have been a wonderful piece of information to have, and it may have given him and Astrid some idea as to what kind of person Tyr is.

Then he got an idea, "Well, can you tell me what it looked like? How heavy it was? I can try and make it for you if you!" he exclaimed.

"I'm sorry Hiccup, but the weapon I used was forged by people with far greater knowledge of the craft than I think you may have." Tyr said.

"What was it called at least? Was it like an axe or a hammer? Maybe me or Gobber will recognize it as something else." Hiccup was trying as hard as he could to get this out of Tyr because to make something

like a weapon for him may win Tyr's trust, and that was in high demand.

"It's called a shike. I see nothing here that's even close to looking like it. Nor can you make it from steel."

Nor can you make it from steel? Hiccup thought curiously. What was that supposed to mean? "I can't make it from steel? What do I make it out of? Thor's backside?" Hiccup scoffed.

Tyr chuckled, a deep resounding chuckle that reverberated off the walls, "The weapon is not made from any type of metal. Its made from carving dragon bone." He said.

"You expect me to kill a dragon for its bones?! You're out of your mind!" Hiccup yelled. He would never think of using dragon bone as a weapon material, and the thought was so macabre and vicious that he had never even thought about it.

"I don't expect you to do anything," Tyr said calmly.

"You offered to make it for me, and I told you what it is made of. I didn't ever expect you to consider actually making the weapon for me. Now calm down and find that girl of yours. We're going to start working with that foot today." Tyr droned, a half wicked smile plastering his features.

* * *

><p>Thar she blows! Read and Review please! Thank you to all those of you who have reviewed the story in the past, y'all are wonderful!<p>

9. Revelation

Hey guys, long time no see! Come December 11th, I will be officially free of the awful semester and writing regularly again! So here is chapter 9 of Depth!

Once again: I Do Not Own HTTYD

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><p>"Step lively there!" A sailor yelled down the docks to Astrid as she hauled a large basket of fish from the boats that had just come in. Since she was younger, Astrid loved working the docks, whether it be loading a long ship for a voyage, unloading a returning ship or even greeting visitors and traders from other islands. It was honest work, and she could keep her finger on the pulse of the village. Anything that happened, be it a child scraped their knee or someone getting married, went through the docks like wildfire. If it happened to people on Berk, Astrid knew about it by the next morning, unfailingly.<p>

"We have a ship coming in from one of the outer ring islands! Get the docks cleared out from all this junk!" The foreman yelled.

Whenever a trader came in from one of the other villages, it was occasion for a healthy clean up. It was on these days that the dock

Foreman, whom everybody had just called Foreman for years, lost his wad with ordering the cleaning.

"Hey! Move those oars to the storehouse! You! Haul those baskets to Meade Hall! Stop standing there with your fingers in your noses and help out!" Astrid could barely hold in her laughter as the mans voice cracked every other word. He'd been yelling all morning and his voice was just about worn out.

"He sounds like Hiccup when he first saw a dragon," Ruffnut scoffed, helping Astrid pull the baskets out of the boat.

"You're gonna sound like him in a minute if you don't watch it," Astrid shot back.

"Chill out, Astrid. Not like he sounds that way anymore. He sounds more like...an eligible bachelor. A very eligible bachelor," Ruff jeered.

"What is that supposed to mean?" Astrid asked. She had grown accustomed to Ruffnut flirting with Hiccup, telling Astrid how she was flirting with Hiccup, and how Hiccup was going to up and leave her. It took Friggs patience to not belt the girl every single day.

"All I'm saying is, if you want him for yourself, you better make sure the other girls know. Plus, I hear that some of the trainees are looking at him too. Be careful Astrid; Your boy toy has become a hot commodity around here."

Ruffnut was usually annoying and insistent about Hiccup, but this was different. She had never come with a warning before. All Ruff did after that riddle of hers was wink and strut away, whistling a random tune. Astrid watched the girls back, fighting the urge to crack her over the head with a fish from the basket next to her.

"Astrid! Hurry it up!" Foreman yelled at her from down the dock.

"S-Sorry!" Astrid replied, embarrassed. In her jovial day dreams of beating Ruffnut with a spiked club, she had completely clogged the dock. Quickly, she grabbed the large baskets and ferried them to the storehouse, panting from running up and down stairs with the heavy loads.

After another hour of hauling to and from the boats, Astrid got a short reprieve when the Foreman halted everything to go and have a look at the horizon. They had been told that a trading ship was coming in from one of the other islands, but so far they hadn't seen any sails.

"Astrid! Come here!" called a wonderful voice. Hiccup was standing at the top of the pier and was waving to her. She flashed a look towards the tower where Foreman was heading and, seeing that he had not even arrived there, sprinted up towards Hiccup.

"Hey there handsome," She said with a smile as she slowed to a walk.

"Hey! Listen, I just spoke to Tyr for a good while and-"

"What did he tell you? Anything important?" Astrid burst. She didn't really mean to interrupt him, but anything Tyr said or did felt like her...territory. Like she should be up to date on anything to do with the man. It had only been this way for a few days, but slowly she had felt more and more...connected to him, as if she could feel his presence, know how he felt at any given time if she just focused on it. It had frightened her a little at first, but she had grown fond of the connection, whether it was imagined or not.

"Not particularly, but he did tell me about his father, and how his father also lived with a prosthetic," Hiccup said, an odd look on his face, "Are you feeling OK? You just got all red." Hiccup said again, the curious look turning into concern.

"I'm fine! So what so good about his father having worn a prosthetic?" She blurted quickly, wanting to change the subject.

Hiccup's face brightened, "Well, because of that, Tyr said he knows very well how to train me to use this heavy foot naturally!"

Astrid's heart soared. When she agreed to train Hiccup on how to use it, she had no clue where to begin. While Hiccup had gotten stronger since the truce with the dragons, he was still relatively weak when it came to intense physical training.

"Great! When do we start?" she asked, excitedly. One thing she had learned is that the easiest way to find things out about someone was to toil with them in some fashion, whether it be sweeping the dragon barn, hauling fish in from the docks or training a certain boyfriend to use a heavy metal foot.

"Well, Tyr wanted to start right now," Hiccup said, with a frown on his face.

"Why the frown? We can start now, it's no trouble," Astrid said reassuringly.

"Somehow, Astrid, I don't think that will be possible," said a deep voice from behind Hiccup.

Tyr Pretor strolled up to the couple, watching the docks intently. Astrid turned around to see what the big deal was, saw what all the attention was on and drooped.

Out of seemingly nowhere, a massive trading vessel had appeared just outside the Berk harbor, and by massive, it was colossal by comparison.

The giant ship was from Nalskkagr, the trading hub of the entire northern sea, and judging by the windows in the hull, had to have 2 or maybe even 3 cargo levels. Those levels would be full with merchandise that Berk needed, and the seemingly small island village would end up with all the cargo. It looked like Astrid was in for a hard days work.

"Well damn it all. I'm sorry Hiccup, Tyr, but I won't be escaping this place for a good while now that that thing is here," Astrid said ruefully.

"Well, Astrid, if you wouldn't mind, I wouldn't mind helping out a bit here. It's been awhile since I was able to do anything of use," Tyr rumbled.

Astrid liked the idea, but she wasn't so sure that Foreman would be as keen on it as she was. The man was very stubborn and, like most of the vikings, very suspicious of outsiders. However, it may be a lovely opportunity for Tyr to show some good faith to the people if he helped unload a giant cargo vessel at the docks, which was the lifeblood of the village.

She told Tyr to wait at the top of the docks as she went to seek permission from Foreman. She ran through the docks, trying to see over the large amount of people who were arriving on rowboats from the trading colossus.

"Foreman!" Astrid yelled as she saw the man yelling at some men who had gotten off the first boat. She giggled as she drew closer and heard the conversation, "...What in the name of Aegir do you mean by mistake?! Eh?! I was told that an outer ring vessel was coming in, not Odin's personal flagship!" he yelled, getting quick mutterings and stuttering excuses for an answer.

The man threw his arms up, cursing as he turned to coordinate the unloading of the vessel.

"Foreman, I need to ask you something," Astrid said to him as he came to face her.

"Yes Astrid, what is it? Make it quick, and you're not going anywhere this time young lady!" Foreman snapped. Under normal circumstances, Foreman would never let her leave the docks, but due to a little known fact, she had a bit of sway with the man. He was her uncle, and her only surviving uncle.

"Well, see, Tyr-you know who Tyr is right?" After the man nodded she continued, "Well Tyr has shown an interest in helping unload this cargo and-"

"Bring him on over girl! More hands means more speed!" Foreman said avidly, and off he ran, yelling at someone.

Astrid waved to the docks and Tyr jogged down. The people on the docks gave him wide berth, but she noticed something very interesting. With each step, it sounded like Tyr weighed a thousand pounds, the docks creaked in protest as he ran. Coming to a halt next to Astrid, she heard Foreman yell from the further down the dock, "Tyr! Front and center on dock two!"

To her surprise, Tyr sprinted off to the bay that was deemed as dock two. The docks at Berk had eight bays in which ships could dock and unload or load or do whatever was deemed necessary, and two dry docks. Tyr had obviously observed the docks carefully and familiarized himself with them.

Astrid herself strode over to dock two to see what the men there had tasked Tyr with doing.

She stifled a laugh as she saw his job: Tyr had been tasked with

catching the cargo that was thrown from the ship, easily the most difficult job to do.

"Thors beard, newcomer! Faster! Faster!" A deckhand yelled with a chorus of laughs from the other dock workers. From that point on, there was a shift in Tyr's behavior. He was going faster and stronger than all the other deckhands, throwing giant crates like they were toys and catching even larger ones with ease.

In record time, dock two finished the first ship, then a second, and a third. By the time the third one was done, Tyr had become the signal caller of the dock, and all the men listened to him without question.

However, he didn't lead the deckhands like Foreman or one of the others. Tyr did not yell, shout or even curse. The only indicator he gave of orders was how fast or slow he moved cargo from the ship. Every now and then, he would speak to one of the hands, whether it be encouragement or belittlement, but his silent lead propelled dock two to finishing five ships in under three hours, an incredible feat.

After they had finished their fifth, Foreman told the men to disperse to the other docks and help out, but neglected to tell Tyr where to go. Instead, He told Tyr to choose any of the other docks and help where he saw fit.

"He works like a controlled madman," Hiccup said, sitting behind Astrid at the top of the pier. She had sat there between his legs since the work began, and due to Tyr's overpowering skills, her presence had not been missed.

"I know. It's a good thing too, because the deckhands have obviously taken a liking to him. Apparently Foreman has too. I just hope that this will bring some more of Tyr's life to light." Astrid replied.

A smile crept onto Astrid's face as she felt Hiccup's strong fingers lace into hers, and she lay back against his chest, reveling in the warmth and the methodical beat of his heart.

"Astrid, there's been something I've wanted to talk to you about for a long time now, and since it's been brought up by several people, I feel that we should talk about it," Hiccup said softly.

"Ok? What is it?" Astrid replied. She had been waiting for Hiccup to bring up their relationship, but he had not done so. She knew that it was foolish and wrong of her to think that he was unsure of their relationship due to the fact that, all niceties aside, it was a wonder that she had not fallen pregnant with his child yet.

"Well, Ruffnut has come to me and we had a chat about marriage and all that stuff. I need to know what you think about the whole matter." He said.

Astrid was about to pour her heart out to him when a shriek and a crescendo of yelling interrupted them. She spun wildly to look at the docks, and the horrible sight before them.

A large carrier had arrived at the docks carrying huge slabs of marble that were chained down. However, the old wood of the ship had

broken where one of the slabs was chained, and the slab had slid off the ship, almost crushing a group of deckhands. The slab had their legs pinned underneath it, but the only reason they were not killed by it was because Tyr had a double handed grip on the chains around the slab and was holding it with all his might.

"Astrid! Get Stoick! You men there get on that ship and help Tyr!" Foreman yelled, sprinting around the docks.

"I'll go get dad, you try and help them out!" Hiccup yelped, and he took off as fast as he could drag his foot.

Astrid ran towards the men who were pinned by the slab, "How are you guys holding?! Any of you know how bad you're hurt?!" she asked frantically.

The men all said that all that was wrong is that their legs were in pain. She flashed a look at the top of the deck where Tyr was holding the slab, and she saw several men trying to help him.

Astrid had always believed that when things were dire, you found out more about people, and it rang true once again, when Tyr said something that nobody could understand.

As the men tried to grab parts of the chain, Tyr yelled, "_Huec oroxse reiok ke! Uri naersi trenje!"_

All movement stopped as deckhands and helping vikings all stared at the silver eyed man, a mixture of fear, wonder, and awe on their faces.

Foreman was the first to come out of the stupor, "Well hurry up! We have to help these men before Hel takes them!"

Foreman's order flung everything back into full speed as men helped Tyr pull the slab of marble up enough for the men underneath it to be pulled out.

As the last man was pulled out, the chains holding the slab snapped, throwing Tyr and his helpers back and crushing the dock. The people cheered as Tyr regained his feet, and he waved at them before returning to the docks and running towards the injured deckhands.

He would have made it there had the crowd of onlookers not swarmed him. Astrid resolved to thank him later for what he had done, and retreated to the top of the pier to where Hiccup had just arrived with his father.

"Well Hiccup. It appears that your friend has made some friends of his own," Stoick laughed, and descended into the crowd to congratulate the man himself.

"Hiccup, when did you and your dad get here?" she asked.

"Only just now. We didn't even see what happened, only that Tyr was being attacked by new found fans," Hiccup said ruefully, "I wanted to see what happened."

Astrid's mind returned to the words that had flown from Tyr's mouth, "_Huec oroxse reiok ke! Uri naersi trenje!"_

What in Hel's name did that all mean? What was it? It wasn't even close to any language she had ever heard. Everybody else seemed to have forgotten that it ever happened.

"Astrid, lets walk. We'll head to the woods and we can talk on the way," Hiccup said, and he walked off. With a glance back towards the crowd, and the silver eyed man at the center, Astrid followed Hiccup.

After around ten minutes, Hiccup and Astrid were walking through the woods near Berk, hand in hand.

Hiccup had told her about Ruffnut wanting them to get officially married, and to be entirely honest, she didn't think she was ready for it.

She had enjoyed Hiccups company, enjoyed his warmth both out and inside of her, but marriage was so...daunting. To become the one thing she never wanted to become, a housewife.

But she would be forever with the one she loved, and that was Hiccup. She was sure that he wouldn't ever try to make her a stay at home, have dinner ready when he walks in the door type wife, but she was scared. She was scared that it would be that way, that in order to protect her, Hiccup might try to turn her into that person, and she didn't want that.

"So yeah, that's pretty much the situation. I'm also kinda worried that Ruffnut might...encourage some of the other girls to come after me," Hiccup said dryly.

Another thorn in Astrid's side. Ruffnut and her insatiable appetite for drama and anything that might annoy Astrid.

Despite being fast friends, Astrid and Ruffnut often banged heads when it came to men. Ever since they were little girls, jealousy of the others experiences with the opposite sex was a constant. Nonetheless, Ruffnut had made it abundantly clear for a long time that she had her eyes on Hiccup.

"Ruffnut wouldn't dare do anything Hiccup. You're mine and she knows it. All the girls know it, so don't worry about any pressure," She said reassuringly.

Astrid was surprised to see a momentary flash of sadness in Hiccup's face before he brightened up, "Sounds good to me!" Hiccup said, before rounding in front of Astrid and twining his arms around her.

He brought her in close and kissed her lightly just under her ear.

"Oh...Hiccup...Not here...Oh...It feels so good..." She moaned. She couldn't help the feel of his lips against her skin. His lips kept kissing and caressing her skin until he was kissing her lips, and only barely at first. Then she lost it.

"_Versi emur,"_ Tyr said to himself as he saw Hiccup and Astrid fall into the soft grass. He had interrupted them once before, which for

Tyr was enough. He was sure that he was older than them, but not by much. He would be marginally surprised if either of them had lived for more than twenty winters, while he had lived for twenty two. Regardless, he would allow them their time together, for it would not be for much longer.

* * *

><p>What in the world is Tyr prattling on about? We'll find out soon! In the meantime, Review and tell me what you think! Your reviews can influence the direction of the story, so make them heartfelt, or someone is gonna drop a slab of marble on you!

P.S: The language Tyr spoke in has a word list that I have created, and I will gladly send it to you if you ask for it. Keep in mind that translations of what was said here will come in the next chapter!

10. Beginning

Hello everyone! By the end of today, I'm officially on break, so I'll try to update every tuesday! Here's chapter 10 of Depth!

I don't own HTTYD.

* * *

><p>Hiccup woke up with a start. It was cold, and he found out why very fast. Both he and Astrid were naked, lying in the grass were they had fallen in lustful embrace hours earlier. Night was falling fast, and they were a good distance from the village.<p>

"Astrid! Astrid, wake up!" Hiccup said as he shook the beauty next to him.

"Umm...not now, a bit longer OK?" She mumbled half asleep.

"No Astrid, really. We have to get back before it gets too dark. Lets go." He said, and quickly got up to find his clothes. Astrid rubbed the sleep out of her eyes and did the same, taking a little while to find her leggings.

Hiccup watched her walk around in the dim light in the nude and for some reason, thought about how she would look in a house at night, getting out of their bed for any given reason. The idea appealed to him much, much more than he could have possibly thought.

"Astrid, I know if feels like we've been discussing this a lot, but...do you want to get married? Like, legitimately, with a ceremony and everything?" Hiccup asked, his breath refusing to come out of his chest while he waited for her answer.

She turned around, still half dressed, her bare chest shining in the failing light, "Well Hiccup, of course I do, but when?"

He ran up to her and threw her in a hug, kissing her forehead, "As soon as possible, Mrs. Haddock." He smiled and hugged her tight.

They spoke avidly about how to go about announcing their marriage to the village, and when exactly to have the ceremony itself. Hiccup was dead-set on having their marriage before the winter was out, giving them maybe three or four months to get hitched.

"It's getting colder by the minute her Astrid, lets go." Hiccup groaned as Astrid took care of her hair.

"Any more impatience out of you and you're gonna need another prosthetic," She snapped. Hiccup chuckled to himself as he watched her. She used to scare him when she got mad, now she was just cuter when she got mad. She hated the fact that he had begun to think that way.

Once she was finished with her hair, Astrid ran past Hiccup as he walked back towards the village, "If you're so impatient, why don't you run?" She jeered.

"Ha ha very funny," he yelled back at her. She giggled and slowed down, waiting for him to catch up. He reached her and they walked in silence, when a rustle in a near tree alerted them.

"Whats that?" Astrid wondered aloud, and Hiccup could see as her muscles coiled in preparation if she needed to use them.

"_Shakte al lorchhi hivni shaktor al lorchia," _Tyr said, as he sat against the trunk of the tree, carving a block of wood with his dagger. Hiccup saw out of the corner of his eye that Astrid's muscles had relaxed, but she was still a bit tense.

"Oh...hey Tyr. Why are you sitting out here?" Hiccup asked slowly, slightly fearing what the answer might be.

Tyr laughed, "Well Hiccup, two young lovers out in the woods sleeping. Something might have gotten ideas. Can't let the happy couple get eaten, can I? After all, you two saved my life."

"Tyr, that very kind of you, actually." Astrid mumbled.

Odd. Thought Hiccup. Astrid rarely gave compliments to people, and when she did it was nothing like that.

It was then that it registered in Hiccups mind that Tyr hadn't spoken in any language he knew of.

"Whoa, whoa, whoa! Tyr what in Thors beard was that?" he yelped.

"What?" the man asked.

"That...those words or whatever, what was that?" Hiccup continued. It was now that Astrid caught on, "Actually that's right! You spoke some weird language at the docks too!" she yipped.

"Oh, that. Something I haven't told you yet. What I said just now was 'he and she shall be man and wife'. Don't ask how I knew that. Let's just say you two are very loud in a quiet forest." Tyr replied.

"Ok, well that's all well and good, but Tyr, when you said you are

from far away, how far exactly? I mean, we know quite a few languages or at least what they sound like. Whats it even called?" Hiccup asked.

Tyr eyed him carefully, then got to his feet. Dusting off his trousers, he began walking back towards Berk, "Come on. I'll tell you on the way," he said.

Hiccup and Astrid followed, hand in hand behind him, waiting patiently for his promised explanation.

After a few minutes, Tyr broke the silence, "Hiccup, how much do the vikings of Berk revere their ancestors?"

Hiccup was caught off guard completely. Yeah, he and his dad laid flowers and prayed to Odin at his mothers grave every year, but other than that, he had never given it much thought.

"Well, I guess we mourn for them and such, but nothing much more than that," Hiccup said.

Tyr stopped and turned to them, an incredulous look in his silver eyes, "Is that all? Really?" he asked, disbelief ringing in his voice.

Hiccup would have answered, but Tyr continued on, "Regardless, My people view our ancestors as our highest honor. They also command our utmost loyalty. The language I spoke to you is called Antenati. Quite literally, it is the Language of Ancestors." Tyr finished, touching his right hand to his heart and then to his head.

"Wow...that's incredible. Who taught it to you? Could we learn to speak it?" Astrid asked quietly, her face deep in thought.

"No living person can teach you to speak Antenati. I can't teach you, even though I speak it perfectly. The only people who can teach you to speak Antenati are your ancestors. Should you honor them enough, they will teach you to speak their language." Tyr continued sagely, deepening the mystique surrounding him and his origins.

Astrid spoke up now, her voice sounding a bit shrill, "But Tyr, I'm not sure how your people did things or interpreted the world, but I've sure never seen any of my ancestors walking around." She said dryly.

"Astrid, that is because you do not honor them enough. Listen to me carefully, the both of you. If you truly wish to speak to those who came before you, you must put them first. In everything you do, whether time be heavenly or horrid, put them first, and they will come to you with guidance." Tyr said, a very serious look shining in his silver eyes.

Then, as fast as he had become honest and serious with them, Tyr resumed his unapproachable manner, "Good night," He grunted, and stalked off.

Hiccup and Astrid stood there in shock, awe, surprise and cold. Hiccup had gone all the way back to square one with Tyr in around five minutes after it had taken two weeks to go two steps forward.

"What the hel is his problem? We were just asking questions!" Astrid exclaimed, shaking her head.

"Astrid, try to understand him here. He just said that his people really respect their ancestors, right after we said that we barely even acknowledge them. He may have been marginally offended by it. Give him some time I guess." Hiccup said to her, still staring off in the direction that he had departed.

"Hiccup, I'm cold. Lets hurry up and get back to the village," Astrid said, hugging her arms under her shoulderpads.

Hiccup quickly agreed with her and together they scurried back towards town. When they came upon Hiccups house, Astrid pecked a kiss on his cheek, "OK, I'll see you tomorrow!" she said and tried to leave, but Hiccup gripped her hand, "Wait! I saw that the fire is still on in the house, meaning dad is awake! Why don't we discuss our marriage decision with him?" Hiccup suggested.

Astrids eyes lit up like the stars above them, and were twice as beautiful, "Lets do it!" She said, and they hurried to the front door.

When they got there, they heard voices in the main room. Hiccup's dad had company.

"Listen Stoick, we have no clue what this is, but we know that Tyr does! Let's just interrogate the bloke and see what he knows!" Gobber exclaimed.

"Gobber, I don't care if Tyr knows what it is, I care about what it means! This is no weapon we have ever seen before." Stoick the Vast answered. Astrid fixed a questioning look on Hiccup, but he held up one finger beckoning her to hold her thoughts.

"Well alright then Stoick. We'll keep it here until we can find out some more clues." Gobber said, and Hiccup could hear the mead flow down the mans throat.

"In other news, Stoick, saw Astrid and your strapping son headed out to the forest earlier, and they ain't been back yet," Gobber chuckled and gulped more mead, "You'll be a granddad before you know it."

"Gobber, you know that Hiccup understands the rules of chiefdom. He can't have a pregnant wife before he is chief, that's the rule around here." Stoick said as he drank his own mead.

"You hypocritical lump! Hiccup was born before you were chief!" Gobber laughed.

"And do you remember how hard it was to get things done with a baby to take care of? I tell you Gobber, it would pride me no end to have Astrid carrying my grandchild, but its too soon for that." his father said.

Hiccup blushed as his father and Gobber spoke avidly about the possibilities of Astrid bearing his children. One look at Astrid said exactly the same thing, except she had a wide smile on her

face.

Hiccup decided that it was time that he and Astrid make their entrance. He eased the door open and walked in, Astrid behind him.

"Hey dad!" he said avidly. His father nodded at him and Astrid, smiling. Gobber, on the other hand, was much more vocal in his greeting, "Hiccup! Astrid! How are you two lovebirds doing?" he laughed.

"Hey Gobber," Astrid said politely. Hiccup greeted his teacher and sat down, beckoning Astrid to do the same.

Instead of sitting in the other open bench, as Hiccup expected, Astrid plopped herself down on his lap. Being taller than he used to be, Hiccup could see over her head when she sat on him, but it still surprised him.

His fathers eyes shone with a mix of pride and question, but Hiccup was pretty sure that Stoick knew exactly what was coming.

"Dad, Gobber, there's something that I've been wanting to tell you guys," Hiccup started.

"You and the lass want to get married?" Gobber blurted. Astrid fixed Gobber with a long gaze, but then smiled and giggled.

"Is that true Hiccup? You want to declare your intentions?" Stoick asked slowly.

"Yeah dad, it is. I want to marry Astrid." Hiccup said firmly.

"Well Thor and Odin rejoice boy! That's a wonderful thing!" Stoick yelled, sweeping Hiccup and Astrid into a giant hug.

Gobber slapped Hiccup on the back, and the combination of that and the crushing hug that his father was giving him resulted in Hiccup being unable to breathe. He coughed and sputtered until his dad finally got the clue and released him.

He landed with a thud as his steel foot hit the wooden floor, taking deep breathes. Astrid laughed as Gobber clapped her on the shoulder as well, her eyes shining. This had to be one of Hiccups happiest moments, and hers as well he hoped.

"So then! We need to make the announcement of this and tell the Thorstons to start planning a wedding! Oh this is fantastic!" Stoick exclaimed as he grabbed his helmet.

"Dad, dad wait! Just hold on a minute. This is a new thing, give me and Astrid a little time to get accustomed to the idea. Can we wait on an announcement for awhile?" Hiccup asked.

He really didn't want to become village news so quick. He knew that if an announcement went out, there would be no possible way to get anything done in regards to Tyr. It would be next to impossible to get to know the man if they were bogged down by wedding formalities and all that junk.

"Well, alright then, son. At least go and tell Astrid's mother. No doubt she is up and waiting for her daughter to arrive home."

Hiccup nodded and walked over to the stairs, "Toothless! Hey Toothless! We need you buddy!" he called. After a few minutes, there was absolutely no movement from upstairs.

Must be sleeping Hiccup thought to himself. All the dragons went into a type of self imposed hibernation to start the winter, and it made working with them slow and a bit frustrating.

"Come on Hiccup, we'll walk there," Astrid whispered.

He regretted that they would indeed have to walk through the cold, but something caught his eye. Leaned up against the wall underneath the stairs was a weapon, clearly what his father and Gobber had been talking about.

"Dad...what is this?" Hiccup asked shakily.

His father stomped over and picked the thing up, bringing it out into the light. It was easily seven feet long, a solid piece. On each end, it was sharpened down into two curved leaf blades that looked deadlier than anything Hiccup had ever forged. The part that shook Hiccup to the core was the material that it was made out of. The thing was a continuous piece of dragon bone.

"Well Hiccup, we found this at the site of that shipwreck, and we think your friend Tyr may know what it is." Gobber said as he stared in awe at the weapon.

"We don't need Tyr, because I know what it is. Tyr told me about a weapon that he used back with his people and he called it a Shike. I didn't really believe him when he told me it was dragon bone though."

Hiccup hadn't believed Tyr to the slightest when the man had said that he used a dragon bone weapon, but now that he was looking at it, Hiccup still couldn't believe it.

"Do you think he killed a dragon to get this?" Gobber asked in awe.

"What do you think, Gobber? How else to you get a piece of dragon bone?" Astrid groaned, rolling her eyes at the blacksmith.

"Well I dunno. He could've found the bloody thing and carved it." Gobber retorted indignantly.

"Whatever the reason, I'm keeping it here until further notice." Stoick said, taking the bone into his own room and storing it somewhere.

Hiccup jerked when Astrid grabbed his hand excitedly, running for the door, "C'mon Hiccup!" she yelled.

"My girl that it wonderful! I can't believe its finally happening! Oh, your father would be so proud of you!" Astrids mother exclaimed, wrapping Astrid in her arms. Hiccup was glad to be left out of another bear hug, but he still wrapped his arms around the two

ladies, and was glad to feel Astrid's mother move an arm to include him as well.

When they separated, her mother was crying, "Astrid...I only wish your father were here now. To think that not a week ago I still thought you to be my happy little girl, and now you're going to be married and starting a family of your own!"

Astrid soothed her mother softly, whispering something to her. Hiccup remained respectfully silent as both Astrid and her mother joined hands and heads, the common way they prayed for her father. The prayer went on for about ten minutes before they opened their eyes again. Astrid's mother was not crying anymore and had resumed a strong look to her face.

"Alright then Astrid. I assume you two will be living together from now on, so you'll need your things. Where will you be staying?"

Astrid chuckled nervously, "Well, seeing as we don't have anywhere yet, I was hoping we could stay at either his place or here for the time being. And mom, don't go telling anyone. The only people who know are you, the chief and Gobber. We don't want it to be announced just yet."

Her mother nodded, "Certainly dear, on all counts. You two will stay here for tonight though, its too late and cold for you to trudge back to his house. I lit the fire in your room, so it should be warm up there. Could you leave me and Hiccup alone please?" she said softly.

Astrid nodded and ascended the stairs to her own room. Her mother turned on Hiccup, a fire in her eyes, "Now Hiccup. I'm well aware that you will one day be chief. I'm well aware that you are known as the First Dragon Rider. I would have you know that I don't care about these things. If you are a bad husband for my daughter, I will kill you." she said simply.

Hiccup shivered. He could tell that this was no idle threat from a person trying to be protective, this was the oath of a mother. Mothers were people that were not to be trifled with, even though he had every intent on treating Astrid like a goddess.

"I promise, Astrid will have a wonderful life with me," He swore. Her mother nodded and retreated to her own bedroom.

Taking a deep breath, Hiccup climbed the stairs to Astrid's bedroom and opened the door slowly. Inside, Astrid had taken off most of her clothes, only leaving leggings and a tight shirt on to sleep in. Her hair hung down her back, luscious in the dim glow of the fire. Her curves were very clear now that she was wearing skintight clothing, but she was moving quickly to wrap herself in a fur.

The fire was on the exact opposite wall of the room from the door, and Astrid had set up two chairs in front of it. She sat down in one of them and warmed her hands gleefully.

Hiccup silently padded into the room, barely making a sound as he eased the door closed.

Inching closer, he leaned down and planted a soft kiss on Astrid's silky skin. She jumped from the sudden contact, but she relaxed again as soon as she felt his lips touch her.

"Well hello there, beautiful," Hiccup said softly, brushing his lips across her neck and shoulder.

"Well, hi the-" She began.

"Shhhh, don't speak," Hiccup whispered. He had been wanting to do this for a long, long time. Whenever he and Astrid had made love in any fashion, it had always been at a rushed pace, as if life was pressing them to move on. On top of that, she had always taken a sense of control, demanding that he go faster or slower or work his tongue more. This time, and he had been patient in waiting for it, he would be in control.

"..Hiccup..." Astrid moaned as his lips found the soft spot beneath her ear. He had taken his fair share of bruises while trying to find the spot on Astrid that he had deemed as her only weakness. Once he had found it though, he could reduce her to pudding in moments. It was a wonderful thing.

Hiccup felt Astrid begin to move her head, trying to get hers lips onto his. He pulled her back down into the chair, "Don't move. You follow my lead," he murmured. If she understood, or rather, tolerated the idea, Hiccup knew. She hadn't punched him yet, so it meant that she was playing along.

She moaned louder as his lips found their way onto her ear, and then she jumped when he nibbled on the lobe. Her moans grew louder and his lips crept closer to her lips, but Hiccup felt that this was too much.

"Quiet, Astrid. Your little brother is twenty feet away from us right now, with naught but a thin wall between us." Hiccup whispered in her ear.

He slid his hand over her face, closing her eyes. Once they were closed, he quickly, but silently undressed himself. The cold night chill hit his bare skin, but he ignored its bite. He was in a zone right now.

He had been practicing, as well as he could by himself, taking control and then keeping it. He had frequently asked other women such as Gemeye and even Ruffnut for their ideas on what to do to keep in control.

Gemeyes input had been invaluable, but Ruffnut thought that Hiccup was asking her for a good time. She had wasted no time in getting naked for him, but he had remained erect in his purpose. He wasn't there that day to bed her, and he left her there.

According to Snotlout and, something that still disgusted him, Tuffnut, he had been a "brainless, cockless troll" for not bedding Ruffnut solely because he had the chance to.

Now being naked, Hiccup avoided any contact with Astrid, but took her hands and lifted her from the chair. She was being wonderful for him, not resisting at all and following his every whim. She gasped when he

finger the ties on her woolen shirt, but quickly took his lead as he removed it, and quickly followed suit with her leggings.

Now, in front of the fire, Hiccup stared at a once again naked Astrid Hofferson, soon to be Astrid Haddock. Something that had surprised him the first time he had ever seen her naked was that her breasts were a good deal larger than they seemed normally.

Another secret Astrid kept was that she wrapped her breasts with cotton and leather straps to keep them out of the way during her daily activities. Hiccup had thought about how much Snotlout would pay for such information but decided against it on the premise of staying alive.

There was no sign of fat anywhere on her body, her skin tight and smooth, her muscles slender yet strong. Her body was akin to that of a majestic shark, the lithe smoothness and beauty concealing a strong and dangerous individual.

He approached her slowly and kissed her left nipple lightly, drawing a gasp of ecstasy from her. His lips traveled around her chest and down her midsection. He kissed around her thighs slowly, methodically, leaving a trail of moistness across her body. Finally, he rose up and laid his lips on hers, kissing lightly first, but increasing the intensity every minute.

After a few minutes, he guided Astrid to the bed. He was good and hard now, and his night of ecstasy was about to begin. As soon as their bodies were covered by furs, all hell broke loose as Frigga took control.

"_Huy nitrei jarichi._" Tyr mumbled. Marriage was the noblest bond. He sat just outside the window of Astrid's room, next to her slumbering dragon who, for obvious reasons, been told to sleep outside. Azure had proven difficult for Tyr to drug, but she was taken care of now. Bringing her to the cave would be done by morning. He held the shike in his hand. It had been far too easy to retrieve it from Stoick's bedroom. The man snored like a thunderdrum.

Tyr was having second thoughts about signaling the Ardni to move in. He had come to like the villagers and their peace, and he thought that maybe it was time that he at least try to stall the death of another innocent village.

He couldn't do that though, because he knew it would come to blades. The Ardni knew nothing but killing and war. To attempt to reason with such people was an impossible task.

His people had been peace loving and abhorred the act of killing anything that drew breath. Their now long dead souls asked him to keep to the law and not kill. He couldn't help the gnawing at his gut that it would be on this island that he died along with these villagers.

He would give these villagers as much time as he could to enjoy their lives, but it was a fact that their clock was ticking down. The Ardni would not wait long.

* * *

><p>Who are the Ardni? Why is Tyr drugging the dragons? Why is he snooping on Hiccup and Astrid making sexy time? Please review!<p>

I extend an option for anyone who reads this and enjoys it. The option shall be below, leave your answer and feedback in a review or PM me.

#####SPOILER ALERT!#####

The following will speak of events to come in a revealing fashion. If you do not wish to see what happens beforehand, do not read further.

Who would you rather speak to their Ancestors first? Hiccup or Astrid?

11. Dreams Return

Hey guys! Seeing as I have a nice long break from school, I'll update as often as I can, which can range from between three and seven days per update. I really don't want to have to put the story on hiatus for two months again --. Anyhoow, here is Chapter 11!

****Dreamworks owns HTTYD****

I would like to thank ****Ahoykailee**** for allowing me to use the names Aislin and Ingrid! They belong to her!

* * *

><p>Astrid strolled towards the forge with two fresh loaves of bread. Since Hiccup had literally moved in with her, in secret of course, Astrid's mood had been over the moon. Stoick the Vast was entirely cool with the idea that his son didn't live in his own house anymore, and even gave Ingrid a stipend for allowing Hiccup to live there. It had been two weeks since the night they told their respective parents about their wishes, and those weeks had been wonderful.<p>

Of course, plans had been formulated about keeping this a secret. Hiccup was never publicly seen going into Astrid's house, nor leaving it. He would always be snuck in the back at dusk for supper and then bed.

The mornings of course, were a different story. Hiccup had thought that the arrangement was a nice relaxing sleep with his beauty every night, and then sneak out the back again for the day. He should have remembered who he was sleeping with. Astrid had him up at the very crack of dawn every morning, resulting in him looking like a draugr as he stumbled through the village. Astrid had laughed every morning at her love as he attempted to find clothes while still dreaming.

She would wake much before him and descend the stairs to do her newest duty: the cooking of breakfast. Getting out of bed without waking him was easy because, due to his blacksmith profession, Hiccup slept like the dead.

The breakfast she had gotten used to making for him included bacon, spiced pork if there was any, and warm cider. If she woke up

particularly early, she would bake bread and serve it with honey or butter.

Once the breakfast was ready, she would leave it over a flame to keep it warm while she rose the steps to wake the log that now called the left side of her bed home. Most mornings, she would just nudge, push and generally bug him enough that he would wake up.

On mornings that she felt playful, she decided to have a little fun. She would always lean down and lightly kiss his cheek, pushing the furs down revealing his bare chest. She would kiss his lips lightly, brushing hers across his own.

Then she would dump freezing water on him.

She giggled just thinking about it. He had reacted horribly the first few times she did it, but soon he learned that when the light kisses came, he'd better move his ass or an icy fate awaited him. Astrid had been considering changing it up and dumping cold water on him randomly, but she had decided against it. Didn't want a marriage ruined by morning wake up rituals.

She approached the forge and heard the constant clanging that had been going for two nights and three days. Three days ago, a representative came in from an outer ring island and requested that Hiccup make an order of saddles at least ten times larger than normal, which was unheard of. Since then, Hiccup had not been back to Astrid's house. He had been sleeping in his office at the forge and working at all hours.

His plan had been to work until he couldn't work anymore, sleep for only three hours, and then work again. It was a plan that would get the order finished, but it would also leave him in a physical and mental wreck.

Astrid had decided to help him out the only way she could: with food and water. She had come up with idea that it would help them bond as a couple if she went through the same physical and mental toil that he was going through. There was a problem though.

Astrid wasn't handling the toil very well. It was leaving her irritable and tired, which of course resulted in her being tense. Earlier that day, she had unintentionally snapped at a few children who were running behind her, sending them crying to their mothers, to whom she had to sincerely apologize to.

Now, in the first hours of the morning, she was bringing more bread to the forge.

Finding it in the dark was easy because it was lit up like a sun in the night. As she approached, she could hear the sizzle of the furnace and the clang of the hammer as it fell on molten iron and steel. She waltzed into the forge through the front and hopped over the counter. Walking through, she saw Hiccup laboring over pin and rod molds. She had learned in her first few trips to not talk when she arrived, because Hiccup kept his concentration like a treasured artifact and hated being interrupted.

To show him what she wanted to say in words, all she did was plant a light kiss on his shoulder. He didn't react to it, didn't change his

rhythm or motion or say anything. Just kept on heating, hammering, cooling. Heating, hammering, cooling. Rinse and repeat. Rinse and repeat.

Astrid felt for him deeply. There was no way she could do such boring, tough work. If she thought that he would let her, she would try to "brighten" his day, but he hadn't acknowledged her presence for two straight days.

To support him, or rather just be there in case something happened, Astrid would bring books with her. Reading was something she could always do, or rather, could do since her only sister Aislin had taught her. Aislin was about eight years older than Astrid, and as such had already learned to read from their father, Aldal. However, Aislin had a steady head on her shoulders while Astrid had a hot head on hers, so Aldal much preferred Aislin and never taught her how to read himself.

Aldal died when Astrid was six so Aislin took it upon herself to teach Astrid to read, and spent the next seven years doing so.

At age nine, Astrid learned that Aislin was being married off to a man from an outer ring island, and would only remain on Berk for another year. Fearing that her sisters promise would be broken, Astrid confronted her at one of their lessons.

Aislin took the concerns of her little sister straight to the chief of Berk, Stoick the Vast. Stoick listened to the worries and, being the man that he was, sent a message to the outer island, demanding that the husband move to Berk.

Surprisingly, the demand was met with no resistance at all and Hrushnir reported to Berk on the next ship available. He and Aislin were married that summer and built a cottage down near the docks.

Astrid's reading lessons continued for another four years, and by thirteen, she was reading and writing with the best of them.

After that, the memories are dark and painful. When they were married, Aislin and Hrushnir were one of the happiest couples on Berk, but Astrid had always harbored a secret fear of Hrushnir because one morning, Aislin arrived at the house with a bruise on her face. A bruise she did not have the night before at a banquet. Hrushnir had shown that he had a love for alcohol, and got quite spirited when he was drunk.

Aislin denied anything Ingrid had said about it, but the trend continued. More and more, she began serving Hrushnir's every wish, no matter what it was.

It all became clear to the young Astrid one night when she slept at Aislin's because her mother was out on a search for the dragon nest. She had been sleeping soundly when yelling woke her up, and it was Hrushnir yelling. Astrid wasn't worried, until she heard crashes, and then she heard flesh hitting flesh followed by Aislin screaming.

The next day, Astrid told her mother what had happened, and immediately, Ingrid had confronted Hrushnir about it. Hrushnir denied it all, and to young Astrid's surprise and dismay, Aislin supported

him.

That continued for a few more weeks. For awhile, Aislin said it got better at home. At thirteen and a half, Astrid was inducted into dragon training. That same week, she met her last uncle, a man named Ragnar.

Meeting Ragnar had not happened in a happy family occasion. All the new training inductees were honored at a village wide orientation in Meade Hall. Aislin had been sick, but dragged herself out of bed to go see her little sister.

While there, during Astrid's turn to go up to the chief, the doors were flung open by a screaming Hrushnir. He screamed about how his supposedly sick wife refused to cook him breakfast, but went out to a gathering at the Hall, and then he struck her. Hrushnir full on punched Aislin over a table.

Then a viking that her mother had called Ragnar stood up, walked up behind the drunk Hrushnir, drew a dagger and slit his throat.

Yes, at her dragon training indoctrination, thirteen year old Astrid had watched a man bleed out on the floor of Meade Hall. Later on that day, Ingrid had explained everything to her, and Astrid actually did not cry, at all. Aislin was in a bit of a mess for awhile, but soon, everything was back to normal. Astrid officially met Ragnar, and for another year, life went on. At fourteen, Astrid was a lovely young lady who spent a lot of time with her sister.

Aislin soon fell ill with a fever, and the fever carried Hel's fury with it. Poor Aislin didn't last two weeks against it and she died smiling, holding Astrid's hand.

"What's up with you, babe?"

Astrid dropped the book she was carrying, startled by the voice. She was sitting on the counter beside the curtain to Hiccup's office.

"Oh nothing. Just thinking about Ragnar and Aislin," she replied, smiling and rubbing her eyes.

Hiccup raised one eyebrow, "Ragnar? Who is Ragnar?" he asked, biting a big chunk out of one of the rolls she had brought.

"Oh that's right, you don't know Ragnar. It's Foreman's real name." Astrid said, muffled by bread.

"Really? He has a name? Well look at that," Hiccup mumbled, closing his eyes and leaning against the counter, massaging his temples.

Astrid took a moment to look him up and down. The flickering torches made his sweat covered body shimmer and shine, making him look like a deity. It was sexy.

She stood on the counter, tip toed behind him and sat back down, threading her legs around him. Once there, she began to knead on his back, something that had become one of his favorite things.

He groaned his pleasure from deep in his chest, and Astrid felt his shoulders begin to unwind.

She stopped knead and threaded her arms around his chest, which was still slim enough so she could get all the way around.

"Are you close to being done? I mean, you've been working for thirty six hours, you must be making good progress," She asked. Looking at the mounds of saddle parts that had grown around the forge.

"Maybe all of tomorrow and I'll be done," he said looking around at the piles. Each pile was made up of only one piece, and each piece fit together to make a saddle. From the looks of it, all he really needed to do was put the parts together.

"Hiccup, I have an idea," Astrid said into his ear. He turned around and kissed her forehead, "Now what would that be?" He asked between kisses.

"Why don't we bring the dragon classes in and have them put the saddles together? We can tell the others to bring their classes and with all of them, around fifty trainees, they can have this done in two hours. Plus, it'll be good for them to learn the different parts of a saddle and how to put it together."

Hiccup slowed his kisses on her forehead down, clearing thinking about it.

"Well, I don't really see a problem with it, how fast can you get the word out?" He said. Astrid smiled inwardly, glad that finally she had a way to free him of some work.

"I know that the others are having a little fun at the overlook tonight, so I can tell them tonight," Astrid said, laughing some more.

"Well, lets go then," Hiccup said, giving her a quick peck before going to find his shirt and vest.

"Wait though, aren't you tired? Why don't you go home and sleep?" Astrid asked, concerned.

"What? Why do that? Who cares if I'm tired?" he quipped from his office. Astrid planted herself directly in front of the curtain and was face to chest with him when he opened it. He was taller than her now, so she had to look up at him, "I do! I will go and tell the others, you get your blacksmith butt back home and get some sleep. That's an order." She stated firmly.

"I'm the chiefs son," he jeered.

"And I'm the chief's son fiancée, and that means that you're going to bed." she retorted.

She stood firm as he looked her straight in the eye, then tossed his hands up, "I can't say no to a Valkyrie. Stay safe," he said, defeated. He gave her a kiss and headed off in the direction of the Hofferson house.

Astrid smiled and took off at a run towards the overlook. She knew

that her friends were still there because of the dim fire that still burnt in the distance. It took her around twenty minutes to navigate the various paths and hills that snaked ever upwards.

Coming nearer, she discovered that the others were not alone. Walking into the clearing where the fire shone bright, Astrid was surprised to discover that two of Hiccup's trainees were as flat out drunk as the rest of the clowns.

Snotlout and Fishlegs sat on a log, arm in arm, singing drunken butcheries of folk songs, while Tuffnut had some girl sitting in his lap, sucking on his neck and Ruffnut was nowhere to be seen.

"Guys! Guys! Hello, drunk people!" Astrid yelled above the drunken singing.

Snotlout was the first to realize that she was there, "Ohhhhh hey A-Astrid! Come to d-d-drin-drink with us?" He laughed, falling over himself stupidly. He managed to stumble over and hang on her shoulder, "You k-know Astri', you're so much more b-b-beautiful when there's four of you," he laughed, his breath smelling like a cow's innards. She shoved him away, cringing as he tripped over a rock and smacked his face off another log, but he was too drunk to realize that he should be in pain.

"Are you guys too drunk to listen to me right now?" she said, pretty sure that she already knew the answer.

"Say what? I'm not that drunk yet." The girl on Tuff's lap said as she turned around, taking a break from sucking on his neck.

Interesting. Astrid thought to herself as she shook her head at Gemeye. She knew the girl had sparkly eyes perfect for getting any guy she could possibly want, but at the same time, she had heard rumor that she had eyes for Hiccup. She was in his dragon class too.

"Well hello there, Gemeye. If you could take a break from fondling Tuff for a second," Astrid also didn't like Gemeye at all, "Hiccup wants all the dragon classes at the forge tomorrow. _All_ of them."

The look Gemeye gave Astrid dripped with venom, but the girl knew better than to mess with her. Gemeye wanted Hiccups favor, and as such she needed to cater to Astrid.

"I'll tell them in the morning." Was Gemeye's reply.

"Where's Ruffnut? Is she here with you guys?" Astrid asked.

Seeing as she had turned her attention back to Tuffnut, Gemeye only pointed off into the woods. Following her finger, Astrid stomped off.

She walked for a good ten minutes before she heard moaning. Then a shriek and more moaning.

No way... Astrid thought to herself as she shifted a couple of branches and looked at the small grove. Littered all around were

clothes, and in the center was Ruffnut, riding some guy like he was a dragon.

Astrid turned away in disgust. Yeah, she and Hiccup had had sex in the woods before as well, but they loved each other! They were going to be married for Odin's sake! Ruffnut was just fucking some random guy in the woods!

Astrid jogged back home trying not to think about what would happen if someone caught the great, respected Ruffnut Thorston with a dragon trainee.

Arriving home Astrid frowned when she saw that there was a light in her room, meaning that Hiccup was still awake. She opened the front door carefully and closed it silently, padding her way upstairs. Arriving home late was no longer an issue with her mother, but Astrid still didn't want to wake her or her brother, or Hiccup on the off chance that he was actually doing what he was told for once.

Cracking open the door to her room, which had become her and Hiccups personal sanctuary, Astrid found a welcome sight.

Since they had told her mother about marriage and all that, her mom had been specific with her little brother when she told him that he is by no means allowed to enter Astrid's room unless told he could do so by Astrid or Hiccup. Ingrid herself never even touched the door unless she asked first. It was a wonderful feeling, having that room where they had complete privacy.

The fire was burning low, but enough so that the room was warm. Hiccup, in all his glory, was sound asleep and looked like he had been that way since his head hit the pillows. Why, he hadn't even taken the time to get out of his clothes and into fresh ones.

It was then that Astrid realized that she was also quite tired and that she only had a few hours until sunrise. Quickly, she removed her clothes and slid under the furs next to Hiccup, who didn't wake, but rolled over and pulled her into his arms.

The forge. Astrid was looking at the forge once more, the destroyed ruin looking fresh and smoking. The odd runes from her last dream were gone, replaced by long single scars in the stonework of the building. The front door of the forge was sliced perfectly in two, from corner to corner, and the cut continued onto the outer stone. Whatever had broken in had a long and deadly weapon.

_Continuing out into the village, Astrid found the same clues on almost every other building: long scars in stone and objects cut into pieces. The buildings themselves were also different. They were covered in blood and gore, dead bodies all over the village. From the pattern of corpses, it looked like whatever had killed these people had flown through with a vengeance, killing and dismembering without a second thought. _

_Walking along the main road, Astrid found another oddity. On the ground were dragon scales, scattered and bloody. But there were no dragon corpses around. Astrid knew that, if the dead here were the people of Berk, then there would be almost just as many dead dragons as people if it had come to a battle. Shaking off her fears, she

continued on up to Meade Hall, where her previous dreams had taken her._

Walking up to the doors, she found the hall filled with dead bodies again and, following the light, she stifled a scream.

The man from her previous dreams was no longer a man, but a dragon. It was no dragon that she had ever seen, it's scales being black and white. Where it was not covered in blood, it was missing scales, and that's where the scales on the path were from. She tapped something when she stepped back, causing the smallest of noises. Her breath stopped as the dragon turned and uttered a blood curdling roar.

It leaped the distance between them with one go and tackled her to the ground. Its fangs were long and dripped with blue venom. Its eyes were acidic green and demonic looking, the pupil being a slit of black. Its venom dripped onto her face, burning her skin away, the pain rifled through her bones, like it was trying to burn away her very soul. The dragon roared and its fangs descended upon her, tearing flesh from bone. Her flesh...

"Astrid! Astrid!" Hiccups voice ripped through her mind. She opened her eyes and found herself looking at Hiccup, her mother and mysteriously, Tyr. She was soaked, as was the bed, in sweat.

"Wha-what happened?" Astrid stuttered. Her whole body shook and trembled, and she found herself being cold.

"Well, I was sleeping when I heard the front door get kicked in," Ingrid grated out, "And when I came to investigate, Tyr was in here holding down your writhing body along with Hiccup. You, young lady, were screaming like the Norns had sentenced you to death." Her mother finished.

To say that she was not scared would be a horrible lie. Astrid had never been so scared in her life of anything that what she just saw in her dream.

"Astrid, it's OK. We're here, everything will be fine," Hiccup crooned. Holding her shaking body.

"Astrid," Tyr said somberly.

She didn't reply, but she looked at him, searching his face for comfort. The dream had only began when Tyr arrived, so maybe he had answers for her.

He got close to her, "When you're ready, come find me at the lake alone. I can help you," He whispered.

"Thanks for your...unexpected...help Tyr." Hiccup said tiredly. Tyr nodded and trudged out, followed by Ingrid, who closed the door after casting a wary glance back at Astrid.

She closed her eyes and rubbed them. This is the first recurrence of the dream in over a month, and it had not been easy. She felt herself being pulled into Hiccup's arms, and she offered no resistance, collapsing against him.

"Astrid...what happened?" Hiccup whispered.

"I don't know Hiccup, I just don't know," she mumbled. There they rocked until she fell into a strained, fearful sleep.

The next day began easily enough. Astrid woke up to the pleasant surprise that Hiccup had woken up early and made her breakfast. In the room was a tray with hot bread and pork and a jug of warm mead. Hiccup was nowhere to be seen, so Astrid wolfed down the food and drink and got dressed.

Remembering plans that had been made last night, she headed for the forge and was elated to see that work on the saddles had already begun. Much to her surprise, the drunken monkey's at the overlook remembered to bring their classes to the forge.

Hiccup was sitting on a bench that was propped against the forge, smiling as he watched the recruits fumble around with saddle parts. Astrid walked up and sat next to him, giving no indication of any further relationship. They had to maintain an air of just close friendship around others because nobody knew of that they had an even slightly romantic relationship, much less that they were actually getting married.

"Good morning, Miss Astrid!" Her class called in unison. She grinned at them and waved. Despite her tough exterior, Astrid loved her dragon class very much. Miss Astrid had been all their idea and she had ran with it.

"What the hel makes you so popular," Snotlout grumbled, holding his head. He must've had a killer hangover.

"Well, when I actually teach my class instead of fucking them, it works out," Astrid said, eying Ruffnut. The girl got an indignant look on her face, "Hey! He was from Hiccup's class, not mine." she said quietly.

"What? Who? What happened?" Hiccup stuttered. He was obviously caught off guard.

"Dude! You still don't know? Ruff and I had some fun with some of your students last night man!" Tuff said triumphantly.

"What in Thor's name did you do to my students?!" Hiccup said furiously.

"Wasn't our idea man. They came to us and one thing led to another. Entirely Ruff's fault." Tuff snickered.

"Don't lie you troll! You got friendly with that girl real quick! It took me at least twenty more minutes to get with Vrack!" Ruff retorted.

"Vrack? Ruff, you had sex with Vrack?" Hiccup asked incredulously. Ruff beamed like it was a great victory, "Damn good sex too," she replied.

"By the gods Ruff, you're stupid sometimes. What about you Tuff? Who did you 'have a little fun' with?" Hiccup asked hesitantly. Astrid could tell that he really didn't want to know, but he probably felt

some responsibility for his students. She felt the same way about hers.

"That beautiful little mutton chop over there, Gemeye. She wasn't into your scrawny little ass. She wanted something tough," he replied proudly.

Snotlout scoffed, "If she wanted something tough, she woulda come over here, idiot."

Hiccups face blanched and he shook his head. Sometimes, Astrid wished she could give Hiccup a nice long, deep kiss in front of them all to show that Hiccup had the most beautiful girl on Berk in his pocket.

As for the tough part, Hiccup was below the bottom of the totem pole there. He had zero combat orientated bones in his body, and to this day she had never gotten him alone in the woods for some training. Well, alone in the woods, yes. Combat training? No.

"Well, guess I have to keep tabs on my students now," he mumbled.

The others laughed and watched on as the pile of saddles grew ever higher.

About an hour later, while the trainee's were taking a break from saddle assembly and eating away at food that Hiccup had ordered for them as a surprise, Tyr strolled up.

"Hey Tyr! When are you gonna come drinking with us?" Snotlout called. The silver eyed man looked taken aback, as was Astrid. Never before had any of the others spoken to him casually.

"Well Snotlout, I'm not particularly partial to drinking, but maybe I'll go with you when next you go." Tyr said, his deep voice catching the attention of passerby.

"Stop being so dull, bro. Live it up a little. How old are you anyway?" Tuffnut added.

"I'm twenty-two," Tyr replied simply.

Astrid flicked her eyes to Hiccup. Twenty-two? Tyr was their age? Astrid would be twenty in three months, and Hiccup, the youngest of them all, would be nineteen in a week.

"You're twenty-two and you don't drink? Must be a boring life dude. When was the last time you got laid?" Ruffnut sneered.

Astrid almost spit up the bread in her mouth when she saw Tyr's whole face shade pink. With the silver eyes, it made his face look pretty. The mysterious, ageless, emotionless Tyr was blushing. He wasn't a supernatural being after all: he was just another guy.

"Ah, judging by that blush, I'm going to guess never," Ruff said seductively, leaning up against Tyr, looking up at him with big eyes.

"I-It's been awhile," Tyr stammered. Ruffnut started flashing her

eyes at him, "Well, come with us tomorrow night, and maybe we can change that," she said softly, and then she proceeded to _strut_. Ruffnut put on the best hip show she possibly could with her tiny butt as she walked back to her crate.

Astrid tried not to giggle as she heard Tyr let out a long sigh.

"Regardless of that, what are you up to?" Hiccup said, strategically changing the topic away from Tyr's sex life.

"Well, came to see what all the fuss in the village is about. Foreman told me that you guys have some project going on up here, but I can see that it's not actually you guys doing the project," he chuckled.

Another one of Astrid's victories rang in that statement. Tyr had damn near been accepted in town as a fixture at the docks, and as such had made quite a few friends. He and Foreman had bonded like long lost brothers, and Astrid couldn't decide if its because they like each other, or if its because Tyr is really good at moving cargo.

Along with that, even some of the women have taking a liking to the man, asking him to do odd jobs for them and, he had even gotten his feet wet with taking care of children at the school house every now and then. Tyr was quickly becoming a part of Berk and it was only a matter of time until Stoick gave him a plot of land.

"Well, Hiccup got a big order in for dragon saddles that I imagine you're going to be loading in a few days," Snotlout called.

Tyr laughed and inspected some of the saddles and spoke to a few of the trainees.

"Interesting," he mumbled, watching Miri thread buckles. He picked up a finished saddle and inspected it closely, "So you put these on dragons, and ride them?" he asked, his eyes wide.

"Well, after the winter. The dragons have been a bit scarce this winter. Every couple of years, they go into a hibernation. I think it's got something to do with their age, but I can't be sure," Hiccup said, munching on a piece of pork.

Tyr grumbled something from deep in his chest and set the saddle down, "Don't think I'll ever get on one of those things. Rather keep my feet on the ground where they're useful."

Snotlout guffawed, "Useful? Tyr, you can't honestly think that you can beat any of us in a fight. Excluding Hiccup of course. Even Astrid could whip your ass," he laughed.

"Snotlout, this is why everyone knows you're an idiot. Astrid could whip _any_ of us in a fight," Tuffnut scoffed.

"I would beg to differ! Here, Let's have a little tournament! Winner doesn't work anymore!" Snotlout declared, and he called over all the trainees.

Astrid laughed when she heard Tyr mutter under his breath, "Didn't

look like you were working any way, _nuri_, "_

"OK you guys, were going to have a fight tournament! If you want to fight, come over here with us!"

Seeing as many of the recruits were not physically imposing, not many chose to fight. Of course, Vrack strutted over with his chin held high. As it all turned out, Vrack was the only trainee who wanted to give it a shot.

"Alright, how do you want to do this?" Astrid asked, a huge grin crossing her features. This was going to be wonderful. A fighting ring!

"Alright, well to get meager things out of the way, we'll have Hiccup go against Vrack!" Snotlout sniggered.

"You're an idiot! Why in Hel would Hiccup ev-"

"Astrid, it's fine. I'll give it a shot," Hiccup said happily. Vrack looked like a slaving hyena as the ring formed and Hiccup entered it.

"Come on then, _teach_, hit me as hard as you can," Vrack laughed.

Astrid watched as Hiccup wound up and delivered the hardest punch he could. It was better than she thought, but Vrack barely moved from it.

"Hahahah! That was absolutely pathetic!" Vrack jeered.

Hiccup looked down trodden, but he didn't waltz out of the circle. Vrack took a stance and looked ready to pounce, when a deep voice interrupted them, "Hold on there, boy. Let me speak to Hiccup quickly," Tyr called, and walked into the circle.

"Wait a sec, I didn't say I'd wai-"

"Shut up," Tyr said abruptly. Vrack looked taken aback, and his face grew purple with rage as the words hit his pride like a hammer. However, he waited and paced back and forth like a lion in a cage.

She couldn't hear what Tyr said to Hiccup, but saw him doing some motions with his hand. He patted Hiccup on the shoulder and returned to Astrid's side.

"What did you tell him, Tyr?" She asked.

He chuckled, "Just watch,"

Hiccup took a simple stance again, and Vrack resumed his jeering manner, "Now that you've gotten your pep talk, take another shot at me," he snickered, and dropped his arms to his sides.

What happened now surprised everyone straight to the core. Hiccup took a short step forward and his right fist rifled from its place and into Vrack's chest, sending the much larger boy rolling back.

A loud gasp sounded from the crowd as Vrack coughed and spluttered, but he rose and charged at Hiccup who, after his stellar opening had no clue what to do next. The result was him taking a beating from Vrack, even though he landed a few more decent blows.

"Fight's over!" Tyr commanded. Vrack rounded and laughed, "What? Saving your precious Hiccup, huh?" he yelled. Astrid felt a sudden urge to beat the every bone in Vrack's body into a big gooey pulp.

"Shut it. There's no honor in beating up someone who clearly cannot continue!" Tyr commanded again.

"Oh, so now it's about honor, huh? Why don't you come in here stranger, and I'll show you how much honor wins you!"

"So be it then, punk." Tyr said and he strolled calmly into the ring.

"Well Astrid, this has become an interesting morning." Ruffnut commented.

"Yeah, Hiccup actually showed some balls and we get to see Tyr fight." Snotlout added.

They were right. Astrid was very interested in the events. She sat next to a bruised Hiccup, but she wasn't thinking about his bruises then. She had her mind thoroughly set on whatever Tyr had imparted to him. Whatever it was, it had changed Hiccup from being a horrible fighter into having a cannon on his right arm. Dismissing her thoughts, she turned her attention to the face off taking place in the ring.

Once again, Vrack resumed his lion like stance, circling and prowling. Tyr stood solidly in on the close half of the ring, his hands clasped behind his back. His silver eyes followed Vrack like a hawk.

Everything was quiet, everyone watched in anticipation.

Vrack took a cautionary leap forward, as if to test the waters. Getting no response, he charged forward, lowering his head for a tackle.

As he staggered up from the ground behind Tyr, Vrack's face was only contorted with more anger.

"Never lower your head," Tyr said, remaining calm.

This time, Vrack charged with his head raised, and his fist cocked behind him. As he hit his spot, the fist flew at Tyr's face, but was met by a palm, followed by a punch to the gut.

"Never display your intended actions so openly,"

Astrid giggled. Tyr's short instructions were amusing everyone else and infuriating Vrack. He looked about to charge again, when Tyr stepped forward.

"And never," Punch.

"ever," Punch.

"Insult someone's honor!" He yelled, and the following flurry of strikes put Vrack on his back, no doubt about it.

Vrack lay on the dirt, coughing and spluttering. Astrid secretly cheered because Tyr had solidly beaten Vrack into submission. She did note though that Tyr's fighting style was very unique, obviously favoring speed over power. She would ask him about it later.

"Dude! Tyr kicked your ass! Haha!" Snotlout laughed.

Vrack crawled out of the circle, muttering to himself. Tyr walked over and sat down next to Astrid, grabbing a jug of water and gulping from it.

While the others bantered back and forth about who would fight next, Astrid cast a concerned look at Hiccup. He sat, laughing along with conversation, but she could see that he winced when he laughed. She found that it was all she could think about. She didn't find normally funny jokes funny at all, and thought more and more about what could possibly be wrong with Hiccup.

Finally, her nerves had had enough, "Hiccup, come with me quick, lets have a look at you," She said, grabbing his arm and dragging him towards the door of the forge.

"H-hey! Let me get up first, geez," he complained in his best geek voice.

They entered the forge and Astrid pulled a chair in front of the door. When she turned, she rushed him and pushed him against the wall, "Gods, are you alright?! What hurts? How bad is it? You need to sit down.."

"Astrid!" Hiccup said over her. He pulled her into him and kissed her forehead. She placed her hands on his chest and rested her head against him. She was worried that he was hurt, and that worry had overcome her momentarily.

"Really, I'm fine. Just a few bruises." He crooned, rocking her back and forth. Astrid knew somewhere in her mind that he was fine, but she couldn't resist the urge to make sure.

"Hiccup, I don't want you fighting with anyone anymore," she mumbled into his shirt.

"What if I asked you to not fight with anyone?" he replied smugly.

"If it keeps you safe, then yeah I'll stop fighting with people," she said.

Hiccup's eyes got large. "You would change yourself to protect me?" he asked.

"I don't want you hurt! I'll do anything to prevent it. Before, I didn't mind if you got a little bruised, but now I don't want anyone to touch you," she mumbled. She was speaking truthfully here. She,

the mighty Astrid Hofferson, the bane of teenage boys and girls alike, the habitual perfectionist, would change her entire lot in life for him. She loved him, undeniably, and she knew that marrying him would be the best decision in her life.

"I love you, Astrid."

"I love you too, Hiccup."

That night, after the tourney and her heart to heart with Hiccup, Astrid was in a good mood. The rest of the day had been fun, and Tyr had joined them for dinner that evening, which he hadn't ever done before.

Astrid was walking to the Hofferson family grave to lay flowers for her father and Aislin. It was tradition that when a member of the family was to be engaged, they left some sort of offering at the grave to appeal to the gods for good fortune. Laying the flowers on the simple stone pedestal, Astrid prayed to the goddess Var for a smooth marriage.

Sitting up, she thought for a moment, and looked around, hoping nobody was around to hear what she was about to do.

"Dad, I'm finally getting married. I know we didn't always see eye to eye, and I know I was a stubborn brat, but I've grown up. I know Hiccup will be good for me, and I really wish that you could be here. Love you, dad." She said to the stone grave. She closed her eyes and prayed to Skadi to protect her father as he hunted for Valhalla for the rest of eternity.

"_Thank you, Astrid," _Said a voice that Astrid had not heard since she was a little girl. She opened her eyes and looked up at the stone pedestal.

"Dad!?"

* * *

><p>Astrid gets to talk to daddy! And what did Tyr say to Hiccup to make the kid punch so hard?
This and the next few chapters will be a good deal longer than my first nine because as I said before, I don't want to get caught off guard by school again.
>Reviews would be wonderful!<p>

12. Time to Train!

Hey guys! Here's Chapter 12!

>HTTYD belongs to dreamworks!

Aislinbelongs to Ahoykailee!

* * *

><p>Astrid's mind and heart stopped. Standing on the stone pedestal was Aldal Hofferson, her father. She couldn't breath, couldn't move and she stared. He wasn't whole; his form was that of a spectre, ghostly, but he radiated warmth. Astrid whipped her head around, looking to see if there was anyone else in the graveyard. It was

late, so it seemed that she was the only one there.<p>

"Astrid?" Aldal asked, dipping his head to look into her eyes.

"d-dad? But, how can you be here?" she stammered.

"Because you wanted me to be here, silly girl." Aldal answered, smiling. When he was alive, very few people could tell when he was smiling because of his beard, but Astrid knew exactly what it looked like because she missed that look, even in death.

"I hear that you're thinking about marrying that Haddock boy. I guess you were never into muscle and heroism and the like," her father snickered.

"Oh dad, stop being mean to her!" Said another voice from Astrid's childhood that she missed dearly.

"A-Aislin!" Astrid cried. What the hell was going on?

"Hello, little sister!" Aislin said excitedly and threw Astrid in a hug. It felt eerie because Aislin's form was the same as that of her father: ghostly.

"Dad! Hiccup is a wonderful young boy! He's learning to be a blacksmith so he can make the weapons that you use!"

Aldal rolled his eyes, "Yeah, fine, I get it. Sorry, Astrid. I'm sure you two will be happy together."

Astrid nodded her head, looking at her father with tear soaked eyes, "Thanks dad...listen, I'm not sure if you guys are aware, but a lot has changed since...well, y'know..."

"We died? It's ok Astrid. We've both come to terms with the fact that we're no longer among the living. How much has changed?" Aislin said, rubbing Astrid's back.

Astrid suddenly got the urge to settle something, "OK, if you guys are the spirits of my ancestors, how can you touch me? Aren't you like, ghosts?" she asked, casting a wary glance at Aislin, who was actually touching her.

"I'll explain that. Astrid. You see, we are not exactly spirits. Think of us like draugr. Except we have minds and personalities and we don't want to kill you. We are a physical appearance of those long dead." Aldal said

Astrid processed this information for a moment. "So others can see you right now?"

"Only those who share our blood can see us, and still they may not. See, Astrid, you spoke openly to us, you wished in your heart to speak to us, and here we are. You have need to speak to us. Others may not." Her father said, his face keeping its kind look.

Astrid considered his words and decided that it was a good enough explanation for right now.

Aldal sat down on the edge of the stone pedestal and eyed his daughter, "So, how much has changed on this island?"

The next two or three hours were spent relating stories, news and general information to Aldal and Aislin about Berk and the changes on this island. Her father had been undeniably flabbergasted when she told them of how the vikings didn't kill dragons anymore, but rather rode them. Aislin had been mainly concerned with Astrid's love life and home life than anything else, and inquired about Ingrid and Astrid's little brother Hodr.

"Yeah, and me and Hiccup are 'secretly' engaged. Nothing has been announced yet, but we think soon."

Aldal smiled about that, but his face darkened a bit, "This fellow Tyr...has he been, hostile or anything? Any funny business with the boy?" he asked.

When he wasn't yelling or being generally unpleasant in his life, Astrid's father had always been protective. Whether it be protective of the Hofferson family or protective of Berk, it was protective. So it was natural that when he had heard about Tyr and his sudden appearance, he had been concerned.

"No, not really. He was a bit distant and mysterious at first, but he's just one of the group now," Astrid replied.

About ten minutes later, while she had been speaking avidly to Aislin about what to wear for her wedding, Astrid felt...something. It was weird, but she felt someone approaching, and somewhere in her mind, she knew that it was Tyr.

She hushed her father and sister and just listen. It was weird, because she was listening to the feeling of Tyr. He walked at a decent pace past the graveyard and further into the darkening woods.

Astrid was about to rekindle conversation, but Aldal stopped her.

"Listen, Astrid. This was wonderful, but we can only remain for a limited time and then we must go. Should you require us, just call and we will come," he said quickly, eying the woods.

Astrid bid farewell to them and watched as they dispersed into mist that then disappeared. A single tear fell from her eyes as she watched them go.

She was on her way back to the village when she got that weird feeling again. The feeling that Tyr was around. She decided to follow the pull.

Walking into the dark woods, she easily found the path that he had been walking along earlier, and she followed it to a lake that had been worked on into a camp. At one end, logs had been cut and stacked into a small hut with a chimney on it. It was on the shore of the small lake, and near it was a large fire pit. The fire in it was large and young, burning high. Astrid followed her twitch and soon located Tyr, wading in the shallows of the lake. Her face flushed red as she discovered that he was bathing when she found his clothes

stacked in a neat pile.

His chest and face were facing her, but she guessed that he didn't know she was there. His hands slid along a scar in his left arm that looked somewhat new, but he fingered it mildly before turning around.

Astrid had to clap her hand over her mouth as his back came into view. Across it were three giant tattoos. They looked like he had been attacked by a three clawed dragon and been slashed on his back. But the colors told otherwise. The top streak was blood red, the middle was green, and the last was black and white.

Interesting color choice she thought to herself. She watched for a few more moments before retreating back into the trees. He had come out of the water, so she assumed he would be getting dressed. She made a plan to emerge from the trees, curious about the light to discourage any suspicion.

About ten minutes later, she made some deliberate noise through the trees, and emerged into the clearing.

"Astrid?" Tyr called from next to the fire.

"Oh hey Tyr? I came to see what the light was," she quipped cheerfully.

"You came to see what the light was? Do you know how late it is? Why are you even out here? Come and have some fish while you're here" he said, beckoning her over.

Sitting down next to him, she gratefully accepted the steaming hot fish and bit into it. It was absolutely delicious and warm in her empty stomach.

"I was at the graveyard laying flowers for my father and sister," she replied through bites on the fish.

"To commemorate something?" Tyr probed.

"Well, you know...just being nice to them is all," she replied awkwardly.

"Don't forget Astrid, I know about you and Hiccup. Or it was just coincidence that I found you two sleeping together at your house this morning. I do believe that tradition here states that two people cannot share a bed until they are to be married." Tyr said happily.

"Well, if you knew about Hiccups disregard for tradition, you might think that it was a coincidence." She replied curtly.

"By the way, what did you say to him at the fighting ring earlier? It was like magic. One minute, he can barely punch, next minute he's knocking a kid like Vrack around like a doll." She asked, gesturing for effect.

"Hiccups entire problem is not that he's weak; he just doesn't know how to fight is all. Take today for example. His first punch was swung around like a sword cut, and his knuckles faced outward,

resulting in little more than a close fist slap. What I told him to do was instead of swinging around like that, punch straight and curl the knuckles so the large knuckles hit first." Tyr analyzed. He knew a lot about fighting then.

"See Astrid, I believe that out of all of you, Hiccup's arms may be the strongest and fastest. His constant work with ore and metal have given his arms what my people called applicable strength. Working by themselves, his arms are extremely strong and durable, but alas, fighting is not a battle of one arm. That is where you are strongest. You have developed the ability to use your entire body to deliver blows, instead of just your arms or legs. You have mastered the use of momentum in combat." He finished and took another fish off the fire, biting into it hungrily.

"So, could you teach Hiccup?" she asked, thinking about how sexy a combat savvy Hiccup would be.

"Why do you need me? You look like you could do it just as well." he replied, giving her a questioning look.

Astrid blushed and looked away, "Well, whenever I tried, we'd end up wrestling, and then that would lead to other things, and in the end, nothing would get done." she said quickly.

He stared at her, his straight lips slowly curling up in a grin and a laugh emerged from deep in his chest, "Seriously? You guys can't control yourselves at all can you?" he sputtered out through laughs.

Astrid punched him on the shoulder, as she would Hiccup, except she was met with packed muscle, "Shut up! What we do with our personal lives is none of your business!" she said sharply.

"Calm down, grumpy. I will train him. Maybe you should come too, that punch was pathetic." he jeered, giving her a sidelong look.

She snapped her eyes at him, searching for a hint of a challenge, "What makes you think I can't hit harder?" she growled.

He put down the skewered fish he had been eating, "Prove it."

She took another bite of her fish before whipping the wooden stick at Tyr, who rolled backwards off the log and jumped to his feet.

Astrid stood on the log and got a running start before launching herself feet first at him. Tyr backed up and let her fall onto both feet, then jumped at her, swinging in a low sweep followed by a high clearout.

Dodging those were easy, and Astrid rolled to the side before firing two punches at Tyr's left side, hoping to take some of the air out of him.

He grunted as the the first punch slammed into his ribs, but twisted his body so that the second only grazed him. As he twisted, he caught Astrid's lead leg with his left hand, then his right curled around her waist and she met hard ground as he tossed her a few feet away.

"Pulling no punches with me, huh?" she panted, taking a stance once more.

"No rest for the wicked!" He yelled, and charged once more. He feinted left and threw a jab with his right, which Astrid easily brushed aside followed by her firing a kick at his left knee. He caught her ankle with his right hand and dragged her past him, kicking her in the side as she slid by.

She grunted as the air flew out of her but still managed to whip her left leg around and kicked the back of his knee.

She winced while trying to get up. He'd landed a very solid hit on her, but when she glanced over, she had landed a good hit too. Tyr had crumpled after the kick, and was laboring trying to get up.

She raced him to their feet and before he could get all the way up, she rolled towards him, curling up like a ball. As she rolled, her feet ended up against his chest, and she kicked out with all her strength, sending him flying in the lake.

She quickly got back to her feet, expecting to block or dodge a flurry of attacks, but when she rounded, he hadn't surfaced yet.

The water of the lake rippled for moments, but grew still. "Tyr?" Astrid called nervously, wading into the dark shallows, worrying that she may have injured him in some way that was preventing him from surfacing. She waded deeper but stopped when a thought struck her.

She had made two critical errors. First off, she had thrown Tyr into the water of the lake, which was usually clear, but being nighttime and with a flame flickering off it, the water was dark. Second, she had waded into the shallows. _Oh shit_ she thought, but it was too late.

The water to her right exploded as Tyr launched himself from underneath the surface into her legs. She barely saw him before she was under water, struggling to get to the surface. Once she did, she felt a hand grab her shoulderpad and pull her up to her feet, followed by a sharp pain in her side as his left fist smashed home.

She lashed out with her right hand and landed a solid hit in the soft tissue in Tyr's armpit, sending him reeling. As she was let go, she took a moment to catch her breath before rolling at him once again. He thought he knew what was coming and knelt down to block her feet, but instead she twisted and kicked him in the face.

She watched with a feeling of triumph as he stared back at her, wiping blood from his lip. His silver eyes looked like a hungry hawk, his piercing vision assessing her.

They began to circle, the momentum of before having worn off. She kept her eyes trained on his chest, watching its every twitch. The circling continued until Astrid saw her opening: Tyr's path would take him over the thick root of a nearby tree. She checked his eyes again, and she was glad to find that they were still set on her. She played dumb and timed her attack. Two more steps. As his foot brushed the root, she launched at him.

Her mind had a split second to cry out when she realized that he had planned the whole thing. As his foot had brushed the root, he redirected it and charged her at the same time. She gasped when his knee collided with her chest, sending her rolling.

She willed herself to take the pain in stride and before he had a chance to press his advantage, she was up and moving. She charging sidelong at him and feinted a slide before ramming her heel into his gut. He spewed blood and spittle and collapsed, gasping.

Placing her hands on her hips, feeling the rush she got from victory. Laughing she walked up beside him, "Good fight there, Tyr."

She couldn't decide why his eyes hadn't calmed or softened, "No..rest for...the wicked!" he exclaimed.

A moment later, Astrid felt an incredible crushing pain in her right side as Tyr's foot smashed in. All her breath flew out of her and she crumbled. She waved her arms around, trying desperately to signal to Tyr that she was done. She was legitimately afraid that he would continue, but to her relief, nothing else hit her.

"You lost focus," Tyr panted, sitting down beside her. He was breathing just as hard as she; he had taken his fair share of shots in their short fight. His lip was swollen terribly, and a gash above his eye bled continuously. Yet, he was the one who was able to continue. It was painful, but she admitted to herself that Tyr had won their bout.

"You...you don't take it easy do you?" she gasped.

"What are you talking about? Is someone who want's to kill you going to take it easy?" he replied, laying down on the grass.

She rolled her head to the side and gazed at him, "I have to get back, Hiccup will be worried," she said, and went to get up, but a horrible pain in her side set her flat, "Oh! Dear Odin..." she gasped, gripping her right ribs.

Tyr jumped to her side, and with a look asked for her permission. She nodded, and he lifted her shirt enough to see her ribs.

"You have a cracked rib. You're not going anywhere tonight." he said, analyzing the wound. Having had the same injury before, she knew he was right, "What about Hiccup?" she choked out through the pain..

"Once I set you up, I'll go and get him," Tyr replied as he went about setting up a cot with furs. He lifted her carefully and set her in the soft furs, giving her a small vial.

"Drink that, it'll make the pain stop for a few hours. I'll be back in about thirty minutes."

* * *

><p>Hiccup sat in the bed and pondered over a new design he was working on. The design included somehow making a bed that was filled with water. It baffled him because in order to do that, one needed a

mattress with no holes in it, but then he was trounced by the need to fill it with water. He wracked his brain to discover a way, but he was distracted by tapping on the window. Getting out of bed, he opened the shutters and almost yelped when he was face to face with Tyr, "Good evening!" he said cheerily.<p>

"Uh, hey Tyr...can I help you?" Hiccup stammered.

Tyr looked around the room behind Hiccup, "Missing something?"

Hiccup recoiled. What had Tyr so worked up? Why was he breathing hard, his lip looked like a balloon, and why on earth was there a large gash on his forehead?

"Well, Astrid isn't back from the graveyard yet, but other than tha-

"Your wife is with me. Get dressed." he commanded.

Hiccup turned to get ready, more for the fact that Tyr had said that Astrid was with him than anything else, "She's not my wife yet," he called humorously.

Tyr chuckled, "Close enough."

As they walked through the woods, Hiccup had been chomping at the bit to ask even though he was afraid of the answer, "How did Astrid get to be with you? She said she was going to the graveyard and then coming back."

"She was at the graveyard. She must've been wandering around and found my camp. We talked for a bit, and then had a little sparring match," Tyr said curtly.

"Sparring match? So why am I being dragged out here?" Hiccup inquired.

"I might have cracked her ribs," Tyr said reluctantly. The man yelled when a small log hit him in the back, "What the fuck you do that for?" he growled.

Hiccup was livid. Tyr had gone and cracked Astrid's ribs? In a sparring match? He had been a bit annoyed and angry that she had gone to find Tyr after her graveyard trip, but he forgot all about that real quick, "You cracked her ribs!? What kind of moron are you?" Hiccup yelled furiously. He usually stayed calm about things like this, but he was angry. Hel had nothing on him right then.

They came into the clearing where Tyr had obviously been living for the past month. In a cot by a large fire lay Astrid, covered in furs with a small vial in her hands.

"Astrid!" Hiccup exclaimed, and he ran to her side. She was sound asleep and warm by the feel of her skin. Hiccup planted a light kiss on her cheek and took the vial in his hands. "Tyr, what is this?" he demanded, holding it up.

Tyr clamored over, "Oh no! She wasn't supposed to drink the whole thing all at once! Dammit, this was my last one too." he said,

tossing his hands in the air.

"What was in it?" Hiccup asked, taking a seat next to the fire that Tyr was re-stoking.

"A combination of herbs and grains. Essentially, really strong alcohol. I told her that it would dull the pain, but if she drank this whole vial, then basically she's passed out from being too drunk." he laughed.

Hiccup, although still angry found a bit of amusement at the notion that Astrid had drank herself to sleep unknowingly.

Looking around, Hiccup noticed a good deal of vials and stills, herbs and spices. Inside the hut, he saw a large table with depressions on it and a heating vent on the outside.

"Tyr, what's with all this stuff? Where did you get it all?" he asked.

Tyr, who was changing around the back of the hut called back around, "I found them in your market. Traded for them and did jobs for them. People here are incredibly generous and polite."

"Yeah, but what are they for?" Hiccup asked, changing his question.

"Back home, my parents were apothecaries. I learned the trade and have been working to master it."

Tyr came back around the hut and walked over to the cot. He shifted the furs and lifted Astrid's shirt, and even though he jumped to stop him, Hiccup neglected to do so when he saw the purple mark that had spread across her ribs.

Hiccup came to her side and stroked her hair, wishing that he could tell her that he was there.

Tyr ran inside his hut and came out with a package. Upon opening, Hiccup caught the horrible stench that wafted from it, "By Thor, what is that?" he asked, his eyes watering.

Tyr chuckled, "It's a herb that comes from far away, called tobacco. It will slow any internal bleeding," he said. Hiccup cringed as he pulled a small, white knife from the sack that he had brought out. Tyr made the tiniest of cuts in Astrid's skin, and covered it in this herb, wiping away any blood that dripped from the cut.

"I'm going to sleep now, Hiccup. She should be fine for the night." Tyr said after cleaning his hands.

"Uh...can I sleep with her?" Hiccup stuttered.

Tyr gave him a smile, "Well of course. I'm sure you two have done worse than sleeping with each other. Seen it, in fact." he chuckled.

"Well obviously, Tyr, but is it going to hurt her at all if I move her?" Hiccup wondered.

Tyr shook his head, "No, she would only feel a bit of discomfort, that's all. The worst will be tomorrow night. By the way, I would highly recommend against her leaving for a few days. You should tell the village that you and Astrid are coming with me to train for about a week or two. That will give her plenty of time to heal."

With that, Tyr retired into the makeshift hut, leaving Hiccup with Astrid and the fire. He lifted the furs and slid in next to her. He felt the warmth of whatever that tobacco stuff Tyr had spread on her was, and fell into a sleep soon after, holding Astrid as delicately as he could.

"What are you doing?" his father asked from the table. Hiccup had gone back to the village early the next morning to gather supplies and clothes for both he and Astrid.

"Astrid and I are going on a little training trip with Tyr. He's going to show me how to be a bit more...Viking." Hiccup said convincingly.

Stoick looked at his son, wide eyed, but shrugged, "Alright, have fun. Don't die, would you?"

Hiccup laughed his father off and retrieved what he needed from his supplies. He had much the same conversation with Ingrid before getting a huge sack with the things Astrid would need. He was plenty content to switch off between two sets of clothes for a two week period, but she would have none of that. She would want as many sets of clothes as he could manage to bring and he knew it well.

He trudged down the path that led to Tyr's lakeside camp, and he noticed that it was well out of the way. When anybody from the village went into the woods for whatever reason, they used paths that were a good twenty minute walk away from this one.

How did Astrid find Tyr all the way out here? He thought. He shrugged it off and resolved to ask her later. He strolled back into the camp to find Tyr sitting on the lakeside, and the cot had been turned around to face it.

Hiccup silently let down the packs and walked over, looking over the top of the cot to find Astrid watching Tyr do whatever. He placed his hands on her shoulders and pressed down, expecting her to jump. She did, but didn't move much as he was pressing down.

"Hiccup! Let me explain..." She said quickly.

"It's alright, Tyr explained it to me last night. He probably has a bruise to show for it too." He snickered. He heard Tyr growl from where he was sitting, confirming the bruise. He came around the cot and their lips locked passionately, Hiccup savoring every last bit of her warm and silky lips. As they broke the kiss, he noticed that she was not wearing anything that she normally does. In fact, the tunic she was wearing was Tyr's.

"So, when did you change?" Hiccup asked, flashing his eye at Tyr.

"Oh, Tyr helped me when I woke up," She said cheerfully. His face drooped. Tyr had helped Astrid change, what the hel. The silver eyed

bastard had cracked her ribs and changed her clothes all in about fifteen hours. Just the changing of the clothes part took him a year and a half!

Astrid must have noticed his face, "Don't worry! I blindfolded him and had him stand there so I could hold onto something." she added. He relaxed. It was only recently that he had gotten this kind of possessive obsession with her. He found himself getting ticked off if someone looked at her too long in the market, getting mad if someone else gave her a drink at Meade Hall, the works. Even when his father, of all people, bought her a new fur dress to commemorate their impending engagement, he found himself a little mad that it hadn't been him to buy the dress.

"Her clothes are drying in the sun over there," Tyr called, pointing over to a pool of sun where Astrid's blue shirt and leggings lay. Her token spiked shoulder pads and skirt sat next to the drying clothes.

"Well Astrid, we're staying here until you're good enough to walk. I brought you a decent amount of clothes to wear from home. The village thinks were spending two weeks training with Tyr, so there's no suspicions about where we are," Hiccup reassured her, reading her concerned face like a book. He had grown accustomed to her facial expressions and what they meant.

"Well, now that we are all awake, how did you get your ribs cracked? Last I checked, sparring matches didn't include such injuries." Hiccup asked. He had been horrendously curious about how it happened. Unless Tyr beat down on her with a club, which was unlikely, she had to have sustained several hard hits.

Astrid related the story to him, telling him of the no holds barred sparring style of their silent friend. Hiccup stared at Tyr as he listened to Astrid's interpretation of the sparring. He silently cheered whenever she spoke of her landing a good hit and cursed when she rationalized which hit had cracked her ribs. Anger would do him nothing though; if Tyr could beat Astrid, no way Hiccup could even hold a candle to him. Not that he would ever think about fighting for revenge, because he knew that Astrid hated that.

"Hiccup! Time to begin my friend," Tyr said, turning around. Hiccup gulped, noticing the determined look in the silver eyes.

* * *

><p>So we found out more about Tyr and the next two weeks will be spent with Hiccup, Astrid and Tyr alone! What may happen?<p>

The last chapters lack of review feedback was disappointing to the highest degree. Please read and review!

13. Ritual of Reverance

Hey guys, listen up. Sorry for this, but its a short chappy here real quick. The next chapter is gonna be a bamboozler to write, so this is here to tide you over!

Dreamworks owns HTTYD

****Aislin belongs to Ahoykailee****

* * *

><p>"Tyr! Calm down on the poor boy!" Astird yelled from her seat. Hiccup had just hit hard ground for the fifth time that hour, victim of Tyr's version of trial by fire. Essentially, Tyr had spent the morning showing Hiccup general technique and to be honest, Hiccup looked better than he ever had throwing a punch. Now, after lunch and a nap, it was time for Hiccup to put to use what he had just learned.<p>

"Every afternoon, we will do a live training session, where you can experiment with what I've taught you," Tyr had said. He had neglected to elaborate on what would happen if hiccup did something stupid.

"Oomph!" he gasped, when he hit the ground again. To Astrid's immense amusement after the first time, Hiccup was destined to be the victim of one of Tyr's throws every time he made a miss-step or mistake. Each time he slipped, or led with the wrong foot, Tyr scooped him up and chucked him. Granted, the man had given Hiccup the guarantee that if the mistake directly related to the prosthetic, he would not be thrown.

Even saying this, the two men had been going at it for a good four hours now. That meant that out of possibly hundreds of exchanges, Hiccup had only made six mistakes.

Astrid had positively hummed with pride when she saw the untapped skill of her future husband. In merely a few hours, Tyr had solidified every facet of Hiccup's physical behavior, teaching the boy balance and a tiny bit of dexterity. With the proper teaching from a source other than gruff viking tutelage, it was discovered that Hiccup had all he needed to be a good fighter, but no way to bring it out. Thanks to blacksmithing, he had good balance and hand eye coordination, and a good eye for subtle details, such as feints and openings. To avoid terrible mistakes in the forge, he had to think quickly on his feet, and it showed here as well. Still, he had dark gloomy moments every time his steel foot got in the way. He was still insecure about the bloody thing.

Also, every time he slipped up, he would glance at her. She had a sneaking suspicion that he didn't want to embarrass himself in front of her, but as far as she was concerned, he was proving her crush on him all those years to be right on the money.

"Good! Move your feet! Always lead off a coiled leg! Like a snake bite!" Tyr yelled, deflecting punches. He watched every move, every strike and immediately diagnosed any problem that Hiccup had along with how to fix it.

Astrid sat back in her cot and breathed a long sigh. For early winter, it was unseasonably warm. The sun was shining, birds were losing their minds and she had even noticed elk prancing about. The morning had been sweet, watching the formerly awkward Hiccup try to do things that she did on a daily basis. Once he had learned the proper skills, he had even made attempts to do things that she had tried to teach him, and to a certain degree had succeeded.

A yelp and some cursing distracted her from her thoughts and she looked over to see Hiccup on his knee, his prosthetic having slipped out from beneath him. Tyr had slowed down and was breathing heavily, saying something to Hiccup that she couldn't hear.

She watched Hiccup flash a look at her, and she could see the sullen look on his face. A bark from Tyr returned his gaze to his teacher, but Astrid could not help but wonder what had brought on that look. He stood up once more and took a careful stance, focusing on Tyr who had begun to circle. Hiccup lunged, firing a punch with his right, then another with his left followed by a sweeping kick. They were a bit sloppy and lazy, but for day one of training, not too bad.

The spar continued for about ten more minutes before they stopped. Panting, they came over and sat down around her. Hiccup walked over wearily, falling down next to her. They had extended the cot enough to accommodate two people so he could sit with her.

"Good job," She whispered to him, planting a kiss on his cheek. He smiled widely but didn't return the kiss.

"Hiccup, gets some sleep. You probably should too Astrid." Tyr said, tossing logs in the fire. Astrid eyed him questioningly. Sleep? Now in the afternoon? "Why? We slept after lunch," she asked.

Tyr stared her down, and she could feel Hiccup bristle next to her, "Astrid, sleep is going to be a hard thing to come by tonight. Trust me."

She decided to shake it off and try to sleep, after she spoke to Hiccup that is. He nodded at them and retreated into the hut.

"Hiccup! You looked great!" she exclaimed, finally alone with him. He smiled wryly, "I guess it wasn't a total disaster."

If she could move her right side, she would have punched him, "Can you give yourself some damn credit sometimes mister? You're always making yourself out to be this constant mistake and you're not! Try not to run yourself down for once!" she cried, anger bubbling inside her. If only he would realize that he was not a total failure as he was years ago. It made her want to rip her hair out sometimes.

"I'm still slipping because of this stupid foot! I just, for once, want to be normal..."

"HICCUP! I swear to Odin if you don't shut your fucking mutton hole about that foot I'll make sure you never learn to use it!" She yelled. She had to stifle a giggle when she heard something fall in Tyr's hut as if he got startled.

Hiccup just stared at her, his mouth hanging off his jaw like a drape. "...Sorry..." she mumbled.

"Why yes, oh furious one, I forgive you." he snickered.

"Oi! Keep it down out there!" Tyr called from his hut. "Shut up!" Astrid called back.

"Oi! Yell at me again and see what happens!" He replied. "Shut up!" Astrid retorted, thinking that this was a game.

"Astrid, I will throw you into that lake, cracked ribs or not!" He yelled again. Astrid and Hiccup laughed loudly, hoping he could hear them. Astrid's laugh died and she fell silent, thinking about what Tyr had said about tonight. Maybe she would ask her father to stand by and watch over her.

She had purposefully not told Hiccup or Tyr about having spoken to her father and Aislin. She was unsure, but it seemed like something she wanted to keep to herself. She had realized earlier that day while she thought back that she never really listened to the words she was saying. Her words were certainly not Norwegian, as everyone else spoke. They were that Antenati, Language of Ancestors that she had spoken. Now, when she remembered all the things that Tyr had said before, she knew exactly what he was saying those times:

"_Huec oroxse reiok ke! Uri naersi trenje!" _at the docks. "Don't bother with me! Help them first!"

He had called Snotlout _nurij_ at the fighting ring. Fool.

Since speaking Antenati, she had felt this undeniable presence in her mind. It always pulled her to Tyr, telling her where he was, what mood he was in, if he was in pain or not. Like a piece of her had gone and attached itself to him. She wouldn't let Hiccup know at all costs because of his issue of insecurity. The past year had sculpted him into a man, but he was still unsure of himself in a lot of things. Despite a decent amount of time at near celebrity status, Hiccup still kept his head down walking through town, and still had issues with doing public tasks for fear of screwing it up. If she told him of this connection, he will no doubt begin to think that Tyr is moving in on her.

Soon, she and Hiccup fell asleep against each other and her dreams were bright. She wasn't sure how long they slept, but she awoke in pain. It was dull at first, but every minute it got more intense. She moved as much as she could, thinking maybe she was in a bad position and pressing on the injury, but to no avail. She opened her eyes and gasped as a lance of pain went straight to her head.

The clearing was in utter darkness. It must have been cloudy as well, because there was no moon in the sky. She could no longer feel Hiccup next to her, and she panicked, her head whipping around to find any source of light, her hands gripping out into darkness hoping to find him.

The pain in her side increased, burning her like a torch was pressed against her skin. She began to whimper as the pain got too much to bear silently. She was too scared to cry out in middle of a dark forest, with wolves and other manner of hungry things that prowl about. Fires will keep them away, but the fire was out.

She gripped her side, trying to will the pain to cease, but it intensified and burned all the more painfully. She began to cry, the pain was overwhelming any sense she had of place or direction, of time or sight. It kept paining her until she heard something moving in the dark, "Hiccup...th-the p-p-pain!" she grated out. The movement stopped, but she knew there was someone there, watching her.

Something was muffled, and it sounded like a person trying to say something, but soon she had no time for that.

The pain grew and began to travel across her body, igniting her nerves. She kept cringing and clutching at the ribs, until finally it became too much. She screamed out into the darkness with no hope of relief. It felt like something was eating out of her, like an evil demon had taken up residence and was forcing it's way out. Through the slits that were her eyes, she saw the fire roar to life, ignited by a stern faced Tyr. Just past him, she could see Hiccup lying on the ground, his hands and feet bound and a rag over his mouth.

She screamed again, clutching at Tyr to come and help her. He did nothing, but stood and watched. The pain roared and she screamed with it, rolling out of her cot. It was then that Tyr acted. He grabbed her by the neck and held her up, staring at her straight in the eyes. She glanced into the eyes and saw nothing of humanity or sympathy, like she was staring at a blank husk.

He tossed her back down into her cot and took something out of his pocket. On a silver chain hung a beautiful gemstone. It was long and rounded at each end, held to the chain by a single metal band around it. She screamed again before Tyr clapped his hand over her mouth. As she felt the pain intensify once more, she wanted to scream again, but noticed the crystal hanging mere inches away from her face. Tyr began to talk, almost inaudibly, but Astrid could hear the words:

"_Nitrei Ortevas kiri ker aiifal,"_ His mouth didn't look to move, but she identified that he was speaking Antenati to her.

"_Saa huy jarichi ji xexilo al wasdoi,"_ he spoke the second verse louder, and the crystal seemed to twinkle and twitch.

"_Al homlk lorchi azshin ji ku mejital!"_ The last verse was basically yelled at her, and the crystal on the chain twitched and swung like it was stuck in a tide. Her side exploded, her bones cracking and her blood pouring out onto the ground. She heard, dimly, Hiccup scream into his rag. Astrid's mind started fading and in the failing world around her, she thought about Hiccup and the life they would never share.

* * *

><p>What in Thors name did Tyr do to Astrid?! I really enjoyed the review feedback on the last chapter, so keep it up!
Please PM or review if you have questions, the translation for what was said here I can PM you upon request, but it will come in the next chapter if you want to wait!**

14. Reflection

Hey guys! Now, this may be a boring chapter for you all, and I'm sorry if it is, but I have a request of anyone who reads this. This chapter is mianly a reflective chapter for Hiccup, and if you could please leave your opinion of how I did in a review or PM, that would be great. Open to criticism here!

**HTTYD **belongs to Dreamworks.

****Aislin and Ingrid****belong to Ahoykailee.

* * *

><p>His mind was numb. His thoughts empty. His emotions were shot, as he had cried for the rest of the night. Hiccup couldn't believe what just happened. During the night, the man had suddenly ripped Hiccup out of sleep, tied him up and gagged him. He doused the fire, plunging them into darkness and as his eyes had adjusted, he could see that Tyr sat on a log, watching Astrid intently. About twenty minutes later, he heard her start to move and whimper. Then screaming. Then Tyr had lit the fire once more and Astrid was screaming her head off and grabbing at anything.<p>

He had yelled, though into the rag, for Tyr to let him go. The silver eyed murderer had done nothing for her, just watched as she squirmed and screamed. After she had rolled out of the cot, he'd thrown her back in and done some chant or ritual that Hiccup couldn't understand. And then utter terror.

Her side had popped, like a soap bubble on Azure's spines. The bones in her side cracked and her blood painted the cot and ground around it. He'd watched in horror as her body had gone limp, her face lolled to the side and his Astrid was gone from this world. Tyr did nothing apart from throw a canvas over the cot and go back into his hut, leaving the fire going and the tied and gagged Hiccup to stare at his now dead Valkyrie. Obviously, he couldn't sleep the rest of the night and cried all the way through. The earliest rays of morning poked through the trees, and Hiccup lay in mourning.

The slightest noise alerted him to Tyr's presence once again. The bastard sat calmly on the same log he'd sat on as he murdered Astrid, staring at Hiccup.

"I told you sleep would be hard to come by," He said flatly, his voice resuming the monotone evenness. Hiccup didn't scream, didn't shout, didn't try to do anything. They were just words, and still barely that. The musings of a killer is what they were. That's all.

"You don't trust me anymore, do you?" Tyr asked. Hiccup eyes and the venomous wishes that they concealed were all the answer he received. "Well too bad, you're going to have to trust me." Tyr stopped, seeming to search for any reaction in Hiccups face. He killed Astrid, that's all Hiccup thought about. He would be the one to cut Tyr's head off, and he would be certain of it.

"You want her back?" Tyr mused. Now he had Hiccups emotionless attention. Even though Hiccup was sure that it would just result in a heartless jab at him, he still perked up to listen.

Tyr dropped the crystal the he had last night on the ground in front of him, "Listen carefully, boy. Her body is there," he pointed to the cot, "Her soul is here," he pointed to the crystal. Hiccup eyes stared at it trying to see if he could see Astrid's face in the crystal's clear pattern.

"You want her back, touch the crystal to her forehead. She'll be back, but you're bringing her back to a world of pain. Don't think

she'll survive long in the state her body is in." Hiccup flashed his eyes around, looking at the blood soaked canvas, the crystal, and a murderers eyes.

"Her body will heal, her blood guarantee's that. I'd estimate it to be around a day and a half to three days. The crystal will tell you when the body is ready. Touch it to her forehead, then bring her back a new woman. Do it now, she'll die no doubt about it." Hiccup's heart jumped from the canyon it had fallen into over night. Was Tyr really telling him how to do this? Did the bastard expect Hiccup to even consider trusting him again? He decided that he would definitely try his luck and bring her back now. With the way things had gone, Tyr would probably slide a dagger between his ribs before three days were up.

Tyr got up, stalked over and grabbed Hiccup's hair, lifting him up by it. Hiccup found himself staring into the silver eyes, and to be honest, he saw conviction there, "Heed these words. Bring her now, you'll have killed her. Wait for the crystal to tell you and you'll have saved her. Your choice." Instead of dropping Hiccup back to the ground, he grabbed the rope that tied the boys hands and hung it on a branch, leaving Hiccup with just enough room to stand. He then cut the bindings on his ankles, and if Hiccup had any energy, he would have tried kicking out. Tyr removed the gag and Hiccup spit and coughed until he got the horrible taste of old felt out of his mouth. He hadn't enough energy, nor had he the ability to form words then, so he remained quiet.

Tyr picked up the crystal necklace and draped it around Hiccup's neck, "I'm leaving. Her life is in your hands, Haddock. Don't fuck it up." and with that, he disappeared into the woods. Moments later, an arrow whistled out of the trees and hit the trunk behind Hiccup solidly, cutting his bindings. He hadn't known that Tyr had a bow with him.

Now he was alone, with Astrid's body of course. On Tyr's bloodstained word, he carried her soul around his neck in a crystal. All he could do was stand there and stare at the cot, wishing that he didn't have to make this decision. Would he trust Tyr? Could he trust Tyr?

It was right then that he felt a prickling on his neck, and a new feeling of presence behind him. Over the tear stained hours of the night, Hiccup had asked anyone he could think of for help, guidance and comfort. Only two people could comfort him the most. One of them was laying in front of him, and the other had died when he was very young, but he knew now as he stood there who was behind him.

"What do I do, mom?"

Valhallarama Haddock wrapped her arms around his neck, "What do you feel that you must do, Hiccup?" Hiccup's felt the tears well up inside him. His mother, whom he had cried for every night for most of his life was now wrapped around him. He spun and buried his head into her, crying profusely, "Mom! I-I don't know what to do, I don't know what to think, I just want this bad dream to end and wake up at home with you and dad!" He cried.

He remembered this very scene from his childhood many times. When he had gotten bullied at Gothi's, he had ran home and cried in his mothers arms. When Snotlout had pelted him with an ice ball, his

mother had stitched his eyebrow while he cried. When he accidentally broke his father's favorite drinking mug, he cried in his mom's arms after getting yelled at. She had cheered him up by chastising his father right there for being mean to a small child, and he'd laughed as his father sat him on his knee and told stories of dragon slayers.

He sniffled and broke away from her, "I'm sorry mum...I know I'm older now and I shouldn't cry like that..." he mumbled.

"Nonsense, Hiccup. You'll always be my little warrior, no matter how old you are," She said as she stroked his cheek. He smiled as he remembered his childhood nickname. He was her 'little warrior'.

"If you could have seen how I cried when I woke in Valhalla, you would understand. I cried for you and your father as much as you cried for me," She said softly. Hiccup touched her hand on his cheek, feeling the skin that had soothed him for years, that had carried him into this world. Her voice was a constant lullaby for him, and he rocked in her arms.

"What do I do about this, mom? I love Astrid, but I just can't decide if I can believe Tyr or not. What if I mess up? What if-"

"Hiccup. You cannot fear mistakes because your life will go nowhere. If I feared my mistakes, I would have never met your father. Besides, if I do recall what you said last night in your delirium, it was Tyr who told you how to speak to me." his mother said, rubbing his back.

"What d'you mean you woulda never met dad?" Hiccup asked incredulously, not believing that his mother had any problems finding a man. Her little bit about Tyr having told the truth about ancestors and all that fell by the wayside.

"When I was about your age, I was part of a tribe called the Boneheads and we had to visit several islands for trade agreements. I was a hotheaded teenager at the time, and me and my friends thought it would be fun to start a food fight at one of the banquets. All the islands we went to were posh and proper, so we ended up having to do it on the last island, Berk. During the banquet, I got a nice thick piece of pork and threw it with all my might at someone who I thought was a regular person. It turned out to be the Chiefs son, and his name was Stoick. What did he do? He threw it right back along with a whole pig. Less than a year later, I was married to that same Stoick and pregnant with you." She said, laughing all the way through her story.

Hiccup could barely believe that his parents met by throwing food at each other. It gave his father that playful side that the man never had. "Regardless, Hiccup, mistakes will always happen. What defines you is how you respond, not what the initial outcome is."

"But mom, a mistake here will end her life! I can't afford a mistake!" Hiccup replied to her, looking again at the cot.

"Hiccup, what does your heart tell you to do? Love is a bond stronger than death or despair, so if you do love her, what does that tell you to do?" His mother chimed. Hiccup thought about what she said and tried to delve into his own heart. His mind told him to bring her

back right now, this second. As he searched within himself, something murmured at the back of his mind. A soft voice, telling him to wait. Telling him to allow Astrid the time to heal.

"I'll wait," he whispered to himself. His mother nodded head behind him, silently agreeing with his decision.

The next hours were spent telling his mothers everything that had happened on Berk since she died. She was elated to hear that Stoick was doing so well and that he had gotten over his deep hatred for dragons.

"Speaking of mistakes, Hiccup, If you fear those, marriage is one barrier you will never overcome," Valhallarama said sweetly. This piqued his interest intensely because other than speaking to Astrid's mother and his fathers own gruff explanations, Hiccup had never had a serious chat about marriage.

"Why's that mom?"

She laughed, "Because, Hiccup, marriage is a bond of love yes, but marriage is defined by problems. Can you and your wife, whoever that may be, overcome the problems you will face every day? You will make mistakes, and you will fear your wife like you fear Hel because of them. You will miss an anniversary. You will unknowingly say something and set her off. There will be times when you feel strained by your wife, when you feel that nothing can help you. As in other bonds, though, the only person who can help that strain is the one who caused it. Fear of problems led to the catastrophe with Aislin and her husband."

"Mom, how do you know about that? You'd been gone for almost ten years before that," Hiccup asked, not intending to interrupt her like that.

"My dear, do you think Valhalla is a one bedroom hole? I have spoken to Aislin, as well as anyone else who died on Berk since I passed. As I was saying, Aislin was scared of mistakes, afraid of problems, so she began serving Hrushnir unquestionably. It didn't take long for him to grow accustomed to it and he grew to see her as a servant rather than a wife because she never stood up for herself," She stopped to give Hiccup time to process, then continued, "By the time Astrid revealed Hrushnir's abusive lifestyle, it was too late to break him of it. When she began to use her will against him and not serve him utterly, that it when she paid the ultimate price for the years that she slept in fear of problems. Of course, I heard that Hrushnir also paid a heavy price for his behavior."

"Yeah, Astrid's uncle killed him in front of the whole village," Hiccup said ruefully. That wasn't a nice business, and as a boy in his room, he had heard Stoick reprimanding Foreman for his act. After that though, they had jugs of mead and toasted for the health of the village.

"And, my son, I don't think we shall discuss the business of pregnancy and childbirth yet," She giggled. Hiccup's face paled and blushed. He hadn't really thought as far forward as kids just yet.

"Let's just say that for nine months, Astrid will want to send you to

Hel," His mother chimed, and laughed as his face grew staunch. This time with his mother had given Hiccup a chance to get his mind off the predicament and onto other things. His mother called his attention back to the cot, but what he found was wonderful. The blood that had soaked the ground and the cot was gone, and the cot was its regular color. Having seen his fair share of blood, Hiccup knew that dried blood clung to anything like a stubborn child.

"Hiccup, it's time for you to face this problem on your own feet. Whenever you need guidance, call and I will come if I can," Valhallarama said, smiling at her son, "I'm proud of you," she whispered, kissed him on the head and disappeared. Hiccup shed a single tear as she left, but knew that he was not alone in his plight and he settled down to wait for the crystals signal.

The rest of the first day passed without incident. Hiccup slept in the cot with Astrid that night, on her left side. He didn't want to lay eyes on the anatomical wreck that was her right ribcage. He had the great misfortune of catching a glimpse of it while he was setting up to go to sleep. It looked like a Terrible Terror had forced its way out. There was a hole in her side, with her ribs sticking out at odd angles and horrific states of disrepair.

No matter what magic Tyr may have used, it had to be strong stuff to have any hope of repairing her. The next morning, there was no change at all. The only thing that had changed since Tyr had left was the blood...disappearing. Its like it just grew legs and walked off. He decided to bath in the lake and get some fish to fry over the fire. Rummaging through the supplies at the camp, he got lucky and found a net in one of the sacks, "Well, food won't be an issue today," He said to himself.

He had discovered that talking to himself was proving a nice deterrent to lingering on bad thoughts, even though he felt like a deranged troll sometimes, talking himself through untangling the net or instructing himself on how to wash his body, even arguing with himself about which way was the best to wash ones back.

Creepily, he lost that argument. The second day moved like a blur for him, nothing ever coming too focused or clear. After a dinner of stale bread and a conversation with his fishing net about the water mattress he wanted to create, Hiccup kissed Astrid's cold cheek and fell asleep, confident that the next day would bring more good news.

His dreams were tormented by images of her bleeding out, of Tyr's macabre, emotionless expression as a life expired before him. Hiccup remembered wishing that Tyr would haul out some magic potion that would instantly cure her, something that would be like, BANG and she would be good as new. As his father had beaten into him at a young age, things are rarely the same as the fairy tales would have you believe. _I'm hoping for a fairy tale ending right now._ He thought to himself as he lay on the cot, awake after a particularly nasty dream.

He couldn't sleep after that and once the sun rose he set about breakfast. Now on the third day, he had gotten over the initial shock of what had happened and resolved to look forward to better things. The thoughts had improved his outlook tenfold, and he knew that she would live.

Throwing the net out into the lake and reeling it in gave him plenty of time to think about his personal drawbacks. His indecisiveness would need to change, that was certain. His fear of public service would need to change as well. He was to be Chief of Berk one day, and that meant that he would need to do all the things his father did now, which meant public speeches in front of not only the people of Berk, but other islands as well.

"..That sounds tedious to me.." he said out loud as he pulled in the net and cast it out once more. He unconsciously fingered the crystal around his neck, wondering what it would do when Astrid was ready. How would it tell him? What happened if he missed it?

"Gods Hiccup, stop asking so many damn questions!" he yelled at himself. It really was frustrating now. For three days, he had done naught but ask questions of himself. Question after question, after question, after question. He never answered himself. Just asked more questions, trying to invalidate his previous questions with ever more of them. He wished to be the heroic, fast thinking, split second decision maker that he knew Astrid deserved.

This time, the net had a decent load of fish wriggling in its folds. Hiccup pulled them ashore, and laid them out on the grass. Pulling over a small log and turning another one over on its end, he made himself a crude cutting board. Pulling out his trusty dagger, Hiccup inspected its old blade. This same dagger had been his very first weapon, given to him on his third birthday. This dagger had cut a Night Fury out of its bonds two years ago, and now it was still cleaning his fish.

Smiling and shaking his head, he set upon removing the heads of the fish and clipping off the fins. With quick moves that he had learned from Fishleg's, Hiccup slid the dagger along the spine of each fish both ways, making thin but succulent filets. Carving off thin stakes, he skewered the filets and set them over the spit.

He hummed a lullaby that his mother used to sing to him when he was trying to go to sleep. His closed eyes and swayed his head along with the tune. While he did this, he didn't see as three of Astrid's twisted bones lurched back into place and the muscles twined into each other.

Hiccup savored the fish meat and, after a brief lounge, he decided to practice some of the things Tyr had taught him.

Placing his right foot forward and his steel foot back, Hiccup assumed a balanced stance that he could block and attack from. The idea of placing the prosthetic back was so that if he needed to attack, he could swing the steel foot through and deliver a heavy blow, the extra damage from the steel allowing him to recover. Should he need to defend or retreat, he can lean his weight on the foot and either spin off it or use it as a crutch to block blows.

He rolled through some of the progressions that he had taken a liking to. Sets of attack and defend that maximized his chances of winning any fight. He fired punches through the air and evaded attacks that never came. The sweat and soreness that accompanied the workout were welcome to him and he opened his arms to them.

He kept flying through air fights, trying to achieve faster and faster punches, rolls and ripostes. Mentally, he had trouble diagnosing problems that he had because he didn't really know what they all were. In lieu of that, he just did what felt right and it worked out. Almost every time. Two run ins with full splits had left his lower feature quite sore. Astrid could do the splits no problem, but flexibility was not his forte. Oh well.

Resting for a few minutes, he noticed that something was hot on his chest. Pulling away the cuff of his tunic, he laid eyes on his lightly haired chest and the crystal that dangled from his neck. The crystal that held Astrid's soul. He had stopped wondering if it was the truth long ago. He made the decision in his mind that if he was to change, for Astrid, then he would no longer question himself at _every _turn. Only most of them.

The heat that he felt actually was the crystal. It was hot against his skin, which he knew was a change because it had been cold. His heart started to beat faster. If the crystal changed, maybe Astrid had changed too!

He ran from his spot on the other side of the lake to her side. Feeling her skin, his heart dropped from its high. It was still cold and colorless. Much like the ice that would cover the island in a few weeks. He drooped; Tyr had estimated 3 days at the most, but it was nearing the end of the third day, and she showed no motivation to wake the fuck up. Or it was this damn crystal. Had he missed the signal it was to give him? Had he been distracted by fishing or talking to himself like a dumb maniac? What the hel kind of trick was this anyway! Tyr was probably sitting in a tree, laughing his ass off, watching him waste his time like a lovestruck monkey as he waited for his dead love to come back from the grave! How did he get caught acting like a complete fool like this?!

For several minutes, he fumed like Thor after Loki had stolen Mjollnir. He legitimately contemplated going out into the wild and killing Tyr, but who was he kidding. Prior to a few days ago, he couldn't even throw a punch properly. _Just cool off, Hiccup._ He thought. Anger would get him nowhere. Settling his hard beating heart, he sat on the cot next to her and leaned his head on her shoulder. His mind searched for any clue as to what he did to her. He retraced his knowledge to that night. Suddenly, something had become clear to him. The verses! The verses that Tyr had spoken! At the time he hadn't known what they meant, but for some reason, now he did! He focused his mind on the words. To better understand them, he lumped them together in one phrase, rather than separated as Tyr had spoken them.

"_Nitrei Ortevas kiri ker aiifal,_
Saa huy jarichi ji xexilo al wasdoi,
Al homlk lorchi azshin ji ku mejital!"

They had been foreign to him, but as he pictured them in his mind, the words shifted and changed, it something that catapulted his heart high into the sky.

"Noble elders hear my plea,

See the bond by honor and blood,

And save her pain by your grace!"

In his translation, Hiccup finally knew that Tyr had not murdered her at all. He had done some fancy healing ritual! His heart flew as high as the sun, and suddenly, he could allow his mind to flow on to better things.

He thought about all the years that he had a crush on her.

When he was twelve, they had to go to some conference on a nearby island, and being a good friend of his father, Ingrid Hofferson had come along as his bodyguard. Not that his father had needed one but it was customary to have one.

Hiccup had to go along too, but he had a wonderful distraction. The thirteen year old Astrid was there, and her hair had just begun to grow long. She was the most beautiful thing he had ever laid eyes on. Admittedly, if anyone had asked him what was said at the conference, he wouldn't be able to tell. He had focused on her the entire time, even imagining how she would swoon over him as he, the great dragon slayer Hiccup and his rippling muscles asked for a wife. That was back when he thought he was just a late bloomer in the department of physical attributes. When Snotlout got big at age fourteen, Hiccup's dreams of muscles wasted away.

Age fifteen, the first time he actually did something worth noting. He and the other teens had been given the job of hanging shields on the annual Snoggletog tree. He had pretty much avoided catastrophe for most of the day and found himself hanging the last shields near the top with Astrid. She hadn't said much to him, and he hadn't really attempted to strike conversation, concentrating on not destroying something for once. A misplaced foot, and Astrid had slipped from the scaffolding. On a reflex, he had reached out and caught her hand. Her skin had been the softest thing he'd ever touched. Before long, he had managed to pull her up onto the scaffold, but in the process of climbing onto the scaffold with his help, Astrid knocked over a torch that fell into the wooden tree.

The blaze destroyed the tree and two houses near it, and when all was said and done and Stoick came looking for the culprit, he had spoken up and said it was all his fault. The only ones who knew of Hiccup catching her were the other teens, and they were reluctant to say that it had happened. Hiccup was berated, beaten and treated like trash for four months for ruining Snoggletog. He had been contemplating running away during that time, but when he arrived at the forge one day, there was a note in his office, addressed to him. Nothing had ever been addressed to him.

_Hiccup, _

Nobody will say it, but I will. You saved me a lot of pain that day. Not only that, you took the fall for me when chief wanted answers. Thanks.

The letter hadn't been signed by anyone, but he'd known exactly who wrote it. That exact letter was stitched into the inside front cover of his personal diary that sat in Astrid's room at her house.

Then, a year later, the magical flight on Toothless in which he had convinced her that dragon's were a good thing, and the first time her lips had touched his skin. It was just as heavenly as he imagined.

He sighed. The gods certainly had a sense of humor. Nobody could have ever guessed that the powerful Astrid would end up with the scrawny screw up. Hiccup was a rarity among vikings, but that made him a liability. Bah, that was all a long time ago.

He covered himself and Astrid with the furs. Threading his fingers through her cold ones, he settled in to go to sleep, hoping that tomorrow would bring better things.

XXX

"The boy shows faith," the spirit said. Tyr watched along, nodding his head silently. He had been there since he had "left", watching.

"How's Astrid?"

The spirit vanished for a moment and then returned, "She's a strong one. Even our people would be hard pressed to last this long in _stasi_. If her body is not ready soon Tyr, she will die."

"Can you accelerate the healing?" Tyr asked. His concern had been growing. This lesson was taking a deadly turn.

"Tyr! It is enough that you asked us to do this for you! We should kill you for this _colata_ in the first pla-"

"CAN you accelerate it?" Tyr grunted. He knew how many rules he was breaking by doing this, but he didn't care. He had foolishly involved Astrid in something beyond his control, all because she looked like _her_. The one woman Tyr could not live without. And because of his weakness, Astrid and these vikings were doomed.

The spirit behind him disappeared with a curse. His ancestors had been furious when Tyr told them what he'd done, but they have no idea of the gravity of the situation. He would need to walk on egg shells for the next weeks.

* * *

><p>There is Chapter 14! Like I said, please let me know how I did with the personal reflection. Other than that, I hope you enjoyed! Reviews welcome!<p>

****P.S:**** To clear up any confusion about the story. ANY conversation with spirits or ancestors (aka Astrid talking to Aislin, Hiccup talking to Valhallarama) is done in Antenati, indicating why Hiccup only now knows what Tyr said in the ritual. It is pointless to try and write all the conversation in Antenati and then translate it. This will be a fact throughout the rest of the story. Serious plot pieces and the such shall be written in fancy pants words and then translated at some point in the story. Of course, if you find something in the language that you would like to know, I will gladly PM you. Thanks.

15. Beginning of the End

Hey there people! I really hope you all had a good Christmas or whatever you may celebrate! This is the long awaited shit hitting the fan chapter of this story! Have good holidays!

**HTTYD **belongs to Dreamworks

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><p>Stretching, Hiccup woke on the morning of the fourth day. His breath was hot and smelled of fish. Yuck. He stumbled, half awake, to the lake where he swished the cool, sparkling water through his teeth. After, he dipped his hands in and splashed the water on his face, where it's chill woke him up.<p>

The crystal, his first thing to do was inspect it, had changed little, if at all. It might have been a bit warmer than yesterday, but he would need the skin of a dragon to tell. Somewhere in his mind, he guessed that she would be ready today. Or her body would be ready today.

A crashing from the nearby trees alerted him. He spun quickly and found Tyr sprinting straight at him.

"Why are you here!?" Hiccup yelled, his anger with the man welling up in his chest.

"Shut up! Come with me!" Tyr yelled, running past Hiccup and into the hut. The normally calm Tyr being so frantic caught Hiccup entirely off guard. He fumbled around inside before sprinting back out and throwing Astrid's limp form over a shoulder, "Where's the crystal? Where is it!?" He yelled.

"What are you going to do? Why should I trust you?" Hiccup demanded. He wouldn't be lulled into a false sense of security just to be captured and forced to watch another murder.

"OK, Hiccup. I'm sorry that you don't trust me. I'm sorry for what I did to you, and Astrid. But right now, if you don't give me that crystal and come along, she actually will die!" he said, exasperated.

Hiccup considered what he said. Was he telling the truth? He was still in the process of asking himself when he got a good look at Tyr's eyes. They looked exactly like his did when he had watched the ritual. Scared. Helpless.

"...Fine, here's the crystal, now what's going on?" Hiccup relented. He was going against his better judgment, but Tyr and only Tyr knew what was happening to Astrid. They began running through the trees and onto a path that led to the far side of the island, where nobody ever went.

"OK, try to not throw shit at me while I tell you this," Tyr panted.

"I'm running here. Don't have much time to do anything else," Hiccup

scoffed. He felt like he was talking to Mildew about marrying a dragon. Hostile territory.

"Whatever. What I did in that ritual was asked my ancestors to take her soul to a place we call _stasi. _The word has no translation into your language, but essentially it is a place that we can send souls to be free of pain while something heals."

Tyr didn't know that Hiccup knew Antenati but he was right; _stasi_ had no real easy way of expression in Norwegian. The easiest way Hiccup could make heads or tails of it was that _stasi_ was The Place of Holding.

"While her body healed from the wound, she was fine in _stasi. _I also meant the whole ordeal to be a lesson for you. You were to learn of the mental trial of believing in one that you love. You weren't believing that she loved and was proud of you, so you continue to question yourself about the things you do, and how she see's you. She loves you, Hiccup. Nothing will change that, even death." Tyr called from ahead. Hiccup dodged a low hanging branch and clamored over a log, taking in what Tyr was saying like a sponge. Why was Tyr telling him all this? Was even half of it true?

"You need to understand Hiccup. If Astrid had any intentions of leaving you, it would have happened already. Not sure if you understand the fire she gets from the other villagers about you, and how she should be with a more...viking...viking."

"What do you mean? Fire from the villagers? How would you know?" Hiccup yelled up to him.

"I worked on the docks for weeks Hiccup. Everything that was said about you two, I heard. Some of it was very, very painful to hear." Tyr said, as he slowed to a halt on a hilltop, overlooking the ocean.

Hiccup slowed to and came to halt directly next to Tyr, who had his eyes closed and breathed deep. "How do you know all this, Tyr. Am I that easy to read?" he mumbled. Tyr turned and placed a hand on his shoulder, "No Hiccup. She told me."

Tyr smiled at him and dropped Astrid to her feet, leaning her against him, "It's time." Tyr droned.

Hiccup was about to lose his mind when he felt the crystal get pushed into his hand. It was scalding hot and trembling. Hiccup felt it in his hand, and in his heart, he knew what to do.

XXX

Astrid groaned. Her head hurt, her side hurt, everything hurt. She felt like Volundr had used her for an anvil for a week. When she woke up from her unnatural sleep, she had been stuck in a weird room, although calling it a room would be stretching the truth. It had no walls, but at the same time it did have walls. Whenever she went about fifteen feet in any direction, she just couldn't go further, no matter how hard she tried. It was like there were glass walls, but nothing was solid.

Over time, she had gotten used to the barriers. She accepted that she

wasn't meant to be outside of her little pen. On the second day that she had been there, a person had begun to appear beyond her area. Then more. In total, about fifteen different people appeared in that world, all of them watching her. All of them wore strange robes and long weapons, bladed at the end. The staves looked eerily familiar, but she couldn't place it.

She had yelled to them, asking them where she was, what was going on, who they were. She had received no answers from them, only stares. She counted seven men and eight women who appeared to her, none of them saying anything. Finally, on the third day, one of the women who looked younger than the rest appeared right in front of her. She couldn't have been older than fifteen years old.

"_Hyi aaj ku?" _She asked who Astrid was in Antenati. These must be...somebodies ancestors. Astrid's memory only stretched back to when she had woken up here, but she knew that she lived on Berk, that she was a viking, but for the life of her she could not remember how she got here.

"_Ker herosa vor Astrid,"_ Astrid answered in kind. A tingling feeling overtook her; this had been the first time she had spoken the language consciously. The girl looked taken aback, "You speak our language?!"

Astrid smiled, "Yeah, guess I do. Who are you? Where am I?"

The girl took a small step back, looking Astrid up and down like she was sizing up prey. Her eyes, previously sharp and unfeeling, softened, "That's an...enlightening surprise," she said carefully. Upon inspection, the girl's eyes were colored strangely. The majority was a bright emerald green, but the inner eye were startling. They were silver, much like someone else she knew.

"How old are you?" Astrid asked, hoping that the girl's reluctance wasn't a sign of distrust. She smiled, "My name is Kia. I'm...or I was fourteen." Kia replied, bowing to her. Astrid didn't push Kia's statement about how she _was _fourteen. Clearly, Kia had died, and at fourteen, it couldn't have been a good memory.

"So Kia...where in Hel am I?" Astrid asked cautiously, not wanting to offend the girl in any way. Once of the strangers had finally spoken to her and she wanted to keep it that way. "Hel? What is Hel? Is that some sort of paradise? Is that your word for world?" Kia asked.

Astrid blanched. How did this girl, Kia, not know what Hel was? Everyone knew what Hel was. The one place you didn't want to end up. "Hel is a place of flames and final judgment by evil gods. I don't know ho-"

"You mean naraka? Naraka is our place of final judgment, where the soul is judged for its merit," Kia interrupted her. Well, at least there was something like Hel that this girl knew about. "Yeah, that. What is this place?"

"This is called _stasi_. The only way that you could have possibly arrived here is if the traitor sent you. So I'm going to assume that you know that bastard." Kia spat the last words out. Astrid found this piece of information very intriguing. So this girl, Kia, knew

Tyr as a traitor and a bastard. Interesting.

"So you're telling me that T-"

"DON'T speak his name here. The others will kill you." the girl said quickly, "Despite who sent you, I don't want you to be killed for such a foolish reason. Maybe you can help him."

Help him? Does Tyr have a problem? Maybe his problem is the fact that he obviously has a history of betrayal.

"Well, what is his problem? What did he do?" Astrid had completely forgotten about where she was, the new topic of conversation interesting her far more. Kia flicked her hair out of the way of her eyes, and suddenly, Astrid was looking at a mirror image of Tyr. Everything looked exactly like him. Her hair was the same, the headband was the same, except it was dark blue instead of purple. She was shorter than Astrid, but the girls admission of being fourteen made up for that.

"He committed the worst crime of the Keepers, and as the result, most of our people died in flame. To this day, we have shunned him, denying him guidance and comfort, which is a horrible fate for any Keeper."

"A Keeper? What's a Keeper?" Astrid asked, completely intrigued.

"We were called Keepers; our tribe were called the Keepers because we guarded a secret that should have never been released upon the world. We were not warlike people; in fact, we believe that killing is a horrible crime. But it only played second fiddle to what Tyr did." Kia spoke softly, as if to not be heard. That time, Kia said his name. Astrid wasn't sure why she keyed on that.

Astrid stayed silent as she watched Kia's face. She was determined not to say anything to change the subject. Kia sensed this and sighed, "At the beginning of time, a horrible demon plagued the world, killing relentlessly until the first Keeper defeated it. He trapped the demon in a black soul crystal, forever sealing it away. We held that crystal in a deep cavern temple, forever protecting it from evil men who wanted to use the demon for their own blood lust. The Keepers were battle monks; we did not fight for pleasure. We did not fight for sport. If we did fight, it was solely to protect ourselves and the demons prison."

Astrid was getting mad at her brain for not being able to hold so much information all at once. Still, she said nothing and awaited Kia to finish the story.

"Early one spring morning, we heard a terrible roar. The demon had been released from its prison by none other than Tyr himself. In our frantic attempts to set up defenses to defeat the beast once more, an army invaded us. The fifteen of us who you have seen here were the only survivors of the raid, and we were taken prisoner. When we were taken upon the ships, we saw Tyr, his head bowed and swearing fealty to this 'king' who had killed our people. Since that day, I, and everyone else here have hated Tyr beyond imagining for what he did. It will be a long and cruel afterlife for Tyr when his wretched life finally ends."

Astrid's mind took in what Kia was saying to her. Tyr had betrayed his own people, his own family, for power and wealth. It gave Astrid an entirely different picture of the man. Everything he had told her, everything he had done has become meaningless. Except a couple things.

"Hold on Kia. Tyr has done some good for us, me specifically," she whispered, not wanting to set off the others that Kia had spoken of. Kia didn't say anything, but her eyes asked the questions.

"Twice. Not once, but twice, he saved my life through his...extreme, healing methods. He saved men on our docks when he could have just let them die. He offe-

"It's a ruse. Astrid, when you get out of this place and back into your own body, you must warn your people. Tyr is the catalyst for an invasion. He has gotten you to trust him, and no doubt he knows the crunch points of your village. You must act. Don't listen to anything he has to say, just get away from him and make sure your people keep away from him."

Astrid felt her gut drop. Tyr was going to _invade_ Berk? With an army? As her mind attempted to trace back to everything Tyr had done, she realized that she should have known. When Tyr arrived, he was on a massive ship with an unknown flag. A ship that large could carry an army, no problem.

"Kia, how do you know all of this?"

She averted her eyes, and Astrid could tell that she was having some inner conflict. Finally after a few minutes she spoke, "Tyr and I were...close once. No longer. I hate him now." she said quietly. Astrid could hear the voice of a lover, even as she said the word hate. She knew that voice well.

Days stretched into weeks, but Astrid found ways to get by. Kia arrived almost every day now, eager to talk to Astrid about her world and her people. She asked many questions about Hiccup and her other friends. The girl was incredibly curious about her life and experiences. Astrid had begun to think, however grim, that Kia was so curious because she died when she was too young. _Tyr's fault_. She thought. She had been teaching herself to hate the man, so that when she got out of this place, it would be that much easier to deal with him.

Each day after week three, Kia started to get concerned, asking a lot of questions about how Astrid felt day to day. Admittedly, she had been feeling a bit under the weather the past few days.

"Why have I been here so long? Surely people would have come looking for me after so many weeks."

"Time passes differently in _stasi_, Astrid. The sole purpose of you being here is so your soul can heal, pain-free, while your body heals. When you get back to your world, you will feel like a brand new person, strong and well rested. That being said, the healing your body has gone through is unnatural in every way. The scarring will be terrible for maybe a year, then it will begin to fade. Three weeks here is equal to maybe three and a half days in your world, give or take a few hours." Kia explained. Astrid had to give credit where

credit was due: because of Kia, she knew exactly what was going on with her body, she knew what the real deal was with Tyr, and she knew how to save the vikings. Kia had essentially changed everything.

"Kia, I don't know what to say. You've been better than a friend to me. You've been like...like..."

"Family?"

Family? How did Kia come to that conclusion? "Astrid, you may never find out how or why, but we are family." Kia said softly. Astrid definitely wanted to press, but something began to beat in her head. A pulse. The pulsating extended to her arms and legs, down her back, through her butt and to her ankles. She looked around frantically, not sure what was going on. Kia grabbed her hand, "It is time for you to return. Remember what I told you about Tyr!" She said, and Astrid's vision began to fade.

She came to her senses, groggily. She felt the wind on her back and hair, and the chill of ocean spray. She was on a cliff, but in front of her was a warm presence. Opening her eyes, she found herself staring into Hiccup's tear stained eyes, "Astrid!" he choked before bringing their lips together. The kiss was long, and long awaited. She felt her own tears welling up in her eyes as she deepened the kiss, wrapping her previously limp arms around him.

"Welcome back, Astrid." A voice said behind her. Her eyes turned to icicles as she realized who it was, and the gears began to turn in her head. Breaking the kiss, she got close to Hiccups ear, "Listen to me. I'll explain all of this later, but right now you need to do exactly what I tell you to. On my move, run back to the village as fast as you can," Hiccup didn't question her at all, just nodded and planted a kiss on her neck, signaling that he was ready.

Astrid heard footsteps as Tyr approached. Her hand slowly crept down Hiccups chest and onto the handle of the dagger at his belt, where she held tightly, waiting for the right moment. One more step. She heard the grass right behind her crunch down and she whipped around, cutting up with the dagger. She felt the satisfying drag that indicated that she hit flesh. Tyr cried out and grabbed his face, staggering back. Hiccup took off down the trail.

Running to the near woods, Astrid grabbed a thick, gnarly tree branch and ran up to Tyr, just it time for him to uncover his face. She didn't see her handiwork with the dagger because she was swinging the branch around as hard as she could, smashing it into the side of Tyr's head, throwing him on the ground where he lay still, groaning.

She spit on him and ran down the trail. She knew where they were because of the cliff. It was called Love's Peak, named so because the sunsets there were beautiful and lovers went there to be alone. Getting back to the village would be easy. Kia had been right, on all counts. Astrid felt wonderful. Physically. Mentally was a different animal entirely. The kiss was unexpected, but it had thrown her heart into a swoon that she loved. She had to shake it off to get the village ready.

As she ran, she heard a loud, booming yell, as if a god was coming

down on them, "Catch them!" It was Tyr's voice, but it was different. It was cruel, vicious and laced with venom.

The forest came alive around her as men wearing leather uniforms dropped from the trees, throwing knives and bolas after her. She dodged and ducked the projectiles, hoping that Hiccup had gotten far enough away. She had hopes of escape before she felt the dreadful fate that a bola wrapping around her ankles spelled. She fell and was set upon by strange men, wearing full leather suits and silken boots. They grabbed her roughly by her hair and hauled her up to her where she was turned around. A mix between a snarl and a smile hit her lips as she looked at the approaching Tyr. His face was bruised on the right side, and blood poured from a long diagonal cut extending from the bottom of his left cheek all the way to the right of his forehead.

"This would have been much more pleasant if you didn't use me for a cutting post!" he snarled, and with a wave, the men carried her off. About ten minutes later, she arrived at a beach on the shoreline of the sparse side of Berk. This side was hardly used for anything because it was naught but cliffs and rough seas. Her lips curled up into a smile. If this was the army Tyr had brought with him, this wouldn't even be a fight. The children of the village might as well fight this one. The men here were outfitted in leather, and carried crates off a huge ship. The ship itself looked like it was an intact version of the one that Tyr had crashed to the shores of Berk on. The sail was massive and bore a red crest of a hawk. As she was hauled in, she saw a large cage, with Hiccup already inside it.

The men grumbled something about not being put together, but still threw open the door and chucked her inside, where Hiccup was waiting with open arms, "Astrid! What did they do to you? Are you ok?" he said as she landed inside.

The men sniggered at Hiccup, "You pathetic little kid! Your little blonde there might want a real man, eh?" he droned, hip thrusting to confirm his jab. Hiccup sneered at the man, not saying anything.

"Hey, maggots! What are you doing there, huh?" Tyr yelled, walking over with his face cleaned up.

"Well, sir, we were tryi-"

"Trying to be useless! Start unloading cargo before I give you to Rath!" Tyr screamed at them. They cringed at his words and scurried off.

"You won't win, Tyr. These mongrels won't stand a chance." Astrid jeered. She wasn't so sure, but something made her think that Tyr wouldn't just outright kill them. She was unnerved to find Tyr laughing, "You think these men do the fighting! Ha! These are the dregs who take out the shit. And what do you mean I won't win? I already have!" he laughed maniacally.

Astrid could feel any hope she had slip down an icy hill. If Tyr was telling the truth, which he had a horrible track record of doing, then the damage was already done. She had been too late.

"The day after I got Hiccup to come and see poor little Astrid was

the same day that Berk was invaded. Your foolish tribesman couldn't fight in their sleeping clothes! They are waiting in Meade Hall in cages much like yours!" Tyr walked away laughing.

Astrid sat back against Hiccup, not wanting to believe what the man they had called 'friend' was saying. At that moment, something shined at them, and horror took over. Emerging from the trees were five men, but they didn't look like the other men here. They wore plated armor and gauntlets, and carried giant, wide bladed spears and swords. At their belts, each carried six steel rings that were bladed all the way round. Strangely, their military attire included no helmet.

"Commander! Soram wants these two brought to the village. He expects them there by nightfall. He also wants to speak with you about a reward." The lead soldier said. Despite these being evil men, Astrid could not help but see that the soldier was extremely handsome, his smooth features offset by a rugged stubble and a mat of black hair. _Shake it off Astrid. These are not boyfriends; they want to kill us._

"Thank the gods they sent you, Milaki. Take them, feed them, tell Soram I'll go see him when I can," Tyr said, his voice still stern, but considerate. The man bowed his head and yelled at some dredgers to come and carry the cage. Two groups of four large men inserted long, padded steel poles into slots at the bottom of the cage and lifted it. The porters stood at attention when this soldier, Milaki, walked over with two full loaves of bread and a large jug of water, "Here. Eat. It'll be the best meal you get for weeks, so be thankful." he said in a rough version of Norwegian.

Astrid took the bread and water from him, staring him down with her best evil look. He smirked and walked off, signaling to the porters, and the cage loped along. They ate in silence, their left hands squeezed together. Astrid was distraught about the whole situation, but if she could have felt better about it, she did because she was in the same cage as Hiccup. Neither one of them spoke the whole time until they got to the village, and then only gasps and curses escaped them.

Berk had indeed been invaded. Men in steel armor stood in every road, drinking and yelling, fighting and drinking some more. There were no fires, none of the buildings had been damaged, but facts were facts. There was a foreign military force occupying Berk, and from the supplies she had seen being unloaded, they were going to be here for awhile. The drunken soldiers made cat calls at her as the cage passed, and one or two even tried to touch her through the cage bars. These men were quickly and thoroughly punished by Milaki's order, one of them even having a finger cut off for barking at the captain.

From the cage, Astrid sighted a large group of the men looking out into the bay, and one of them stood out. Wearing ornate steel armor and a flowing gold cape was a man who had to be this Soram she had heard of. He carried no steel rings, but his sword that sat on his belt was a sight to behold. It was a regular sword, but the hilt had a giant black crystal imbedded in it. At a call, he turned and watched their cage stroll past, his facial expression not changing at all before he turned back to what he was doing.

The cage trundled into Meade Hall, and Astrid found none of the villagers there. She hadn't seen a sign of them since reaching town. Until they went into one of the large side chambers, and there, all in cages of varying sizes, were the villagers of Berk. None hurt, even bruised, except three. Stoick the Vast sported a considerable bruise on his temple, Gobber the Belch had bruises all over him, and none of his fake limbs, and of all people, Fishlegs sported some nice bruises.

"Astrid! Hiccup!" A call from several cages that strangely, were all lumped together with a perfect space between them for the cage Astrid was currently in. The cages around them held Stoick, Gobber, Ingrid, Hodr, Foreman and all their friends. Fishlegs and Ruffnut were in one cage with Snotlout and Tuffnut being in their own cages around them.

"Guys! Are you guys alright? What happened?" Hiccup exclaimed, more talking to his father and Ingrid than the others. Stoick shook his head in shame, "They came in the night, Hiccup. We didn't stand a chance. Those of us who kept weapons at home were taken first and those who went to the forge to get weapons found the place cleared out. It was empty."

Ingrid continued, taking Astrid's outstretched hand, "They didn't hurt any of us who didn't fight back. Most of us were dragged into the streets while still wiping the sleep from our eyes. I huddled in a corner with Hodr, and the men came. I said I wouldn't fight, and one of them wanted to drag me out, but the other said that they were under orders from Tyr to not hurt anyone,"

Stoick spoke up again, fury in his voice, "And that tells us who is responsible for this dishonor." he growled. Astrid gave Hiccup a curious look. Tyr had told these men to not hurt anybody? Regardless, if Tyr hadn't arrived here, this would never be happening.

"Dad, you fought back?" Astrid said. She hadn't been thinking when she said it, and the multiple looks she got, she ignored. The fact that Stoick may as well have been her father was inconsequential news at this point. Stoick managed a smile, "Aye, beat down six of them. Killed two before someone hit me with a hammer or something. Gobber held his own quite well, until his wooden leg was chopped out from under him. Fishleg's was the surprise. He lost his bloody mind and trampled thirteen soldiers, and I think five of them were dead by the time he was taken. Most of the other men were subdued long before they could rally."

Astrid and Hiccup left their parents and turned to their friends, "How about you guys? Anyone hurt?" Hiccup asked. Tuffnut and Snotlout murmured their answers as Fishlegs groaned about his bruises. Ruffnut didn't say anything. The girl was sitting, huddled next to Fishlegs, her body shaking uncontrollably.

Astrid immediately knew that something severe had happened either to her or around her. Ruffnut loved to play the tough viking maiden, but she had no taste for violence. "Ruff...what happened? What's wrong?" Astrid asked slowly.

Ruff shook and looked at Astrid, her eyes conveying a terror that she was going through, "I...I was in the woods with Vrack when the men came. We were in the middle of sex when the first soldier crashed

through the woods into our clearing. They knew exactly where we were, as if they had prior knowledge to our favorite spot. When he yelled at us to come with him, Vrack threw me in front of the soldier, naked and all. He then told the soldier that if he let him go, the soldier could have his way with me and no one would be the wiser. I thought for sure I was going to be raped, but the soldier threw his cape down onto me, and I heard a gurgle. When I looked again, Vrack's head was rolling on the grass in front of me, and I was showered in his blood." She shook into tears as she finished, and Fishlegs wrapped an arm around her, his large limb enveloping her and pulling her in. She sobbed against the bruised boy for a few minutes and then went silent.

Astrid mind ran. Even under orders to not hurt anyone, the soldiers had killed one of them. She didn't particularly like Vrack, but regardless. A dead boy was a dead boy. What did it represent to her?

These men would not hesitate to kill.

Astrid and Hiccup exchanged their stories of where they had been and how Tyr had tricked them. Nothing they said was astonishing now; the shock that the villagers were in was plenty enough. It continued in silence until later that day, when Soram walked in, flanked by Tyr.

"You son of a whore!"

"How could you betray us like this?"

"We saved your pathetic life, fool!" Various villagers yelled at him. There were countless more insults that flew out that were drowned out by the ones Astrid could hear. Soram chuckled, "My dear vikings, barbaric as you are, please let me ask for some civility in my Hall. Us Ardni prefer calm and courteousness, even from lowly prisoners." His tone disgusted her. The tone of an overconfident ass who thought of nothing but himself.

This was until a woman named Freda yelled from her cell, "You were our friend! You even took care of my kids!" Astrid watched carefully and saw something twitch in Soram's eye. Was that anger she saw?

"Yeah Tyr! You saved my life! You put your own life on the line for someone else!" she yelled, seeing if she could fuel the fire building in Soram's eyes. One of the dockworkers whom had almost been crushed yelled out, "You saved me and my brothers! You spoke in your native tongue, but you saved us regardless!"

Astrid was going to yell something else out, but Soram's fury broke the damn of his patience, "WHAT!? Tyr! Did you befriend this bunch of pathetic husks?" he screamed, whirling on Tyr and reaching for his sword.

Tyr got a scared look in his eye, "No Soram! They are lying! I know the law! Please!" Tyr begged, but Soram advanced on him anyway. "I've had enough of your pathetic attempts at emotion! You are mine you spineless bastard! You do what I tell you to, and that means not befriending our enemies!" And he slammed his hand down on the large black crystal, which shimmered and boiled.

Tyr screamed and fell to the floor, arching his back. He rolled, screaming in the most bloodcurdling fashion Astrid had ever heard. Soram advanced, an insane look in his eye, "Well Tyr? Shall we show our guests what happens when you defy me?! Eh?!" Tyr didn't answer in any sort of way, his screaming gaining momentum. He was reaching around at his back, and then bones began to crunch. Soram gripped the crystal harder and harder until one of its smooth creases cut the mans hand. Astrid could have sworn that she saw the color of Tyr's eyes change for a bare second, and then Soram released his hold on the crystal. He knelt down and grabbed Tyr's hair, "I hope that whore of a mother of yours is watching you right now Tyr. I would tell you the names of my men that satisfied her endless begging to have things shoved into her, but it would take too long to list half my army. She was a whore Tyr; and you came from her loins, you honorless bastard." Soram dropped Tyr's face to the cold tile floor and stomped out.

For everything that she had accused Tyr of, everything he had to do to her, Astrid felt a legitimate pang of sympathy. No man, no matter what he did in his life, deserved what had just taken place. The connection to him in her mind screamed for her to go to his side, screamed to her that Tyr is not in as much control as it seems. But once she thought about where they were and why, she enjoyed Tyr's pain.

The man lay there for what seemed like hours. Face down and unmoving. When men came in with bread, they laughed at him, "What you get for pissing off Soram, dog." Astrid, who lay in Hiccup's lap, found these words interesting. Though the men call him commander, when he couldn't belt them, they spoke to him like he was a slave. At some point during the night, Tyr must have left because he wasn't on the floor when she woke.

When the men came in with bread and water for breakfast, a woman asked where they would use the bathroom. "Shit on yourself, we don't care," the soldier had replied gruffly.

"Take them outside and let them do their business in the forest." Said a shaky voice as Tyr walked in.

"Why should we do that?" the soldier sneered.

"Because Soram doesn't want it to stink in here! Or do you want to go and tell him that you think he's a fucking pansy?" Tyr retorted. At the mention of facing their king, chief whatever he was, the soldier paled and immediately made arrangements for the villagers to go to the bathroom whenever needed.

Tyr looked straight at Astrid, "Thanks for the fucking stunt you pulled, bitch."

Astrid smiled wickedly, "Oh, you deserved every painful second of it," she snarled. He scoffed at her, "See if you're smiling much when Soram comes around tomorrow to decide the fate of your foolish, ignorant people. Gods, any half intelligent person would have thrown me out ages ago."

The soldiers around the room snickered. When they weren't in that steel armor, they looked just like pirates. They drank at all hours of the day, and really didn't make any intelligent conversation at

all. The only one of them that had remained continuously proper, intelligent and somewhat compassionate was Milaki. Often, he would come with extra bread for everyone, or extra water. Sometimes, he would stand guard in the room the whole day and keep the rougher guards from making trouble.

Other than when she and Hiccup were back at the shore camp, Milaki never spoke to anyone. Just hand signals and grunts.

The day Tyr spoke of came, and each cage was brought into the main chamber of Meade Hall. The villagers of Berk sat huddled in cages in the same room that they had banquets in not two weeks earlier. Soram sat upon a throne that had obviously been carried in there from a ship. It was solid gold and jeweled, but above it was more macabre. In a giant net lay hundreds, maybe even up to a thousand flags, which Astrid guessed had to be from earlier conquests.

"Noble, barbaric, foolish vikings of Berk! I welcome you to my new Hall and the new home of the tribe of War, the Ardni!" Soram exclaimed. All the gathered thugs cheered, raising mugs and tankards.

"This is our Hall, demon!" somebody yelled. Soram heard it and chuckled, "If you cannot hold it, you don't deserve it," he jeered, and continued on his rant. "I am here, serfs, to bestow upon you a great honor. You can rise above your pathetic lives here and serve me, the God Soram, as slaves for the rest of your lives! The women here will bear my seed and carry worthy heirs to term, populating the new world with men who will be like me: perfect! I-"

"What makes you a god?" Stoick the Vast yelled from his cell. Soram looked like he was ready to pop. "What makes me a god?! Well, isn't the answer right in front of you, you stupid viking? Of course you cannot see it. Look at my throne, look at my soldiers," They looked like anybody you could find in a brothel, "These are all the things a god needs, and I have fulfilled the requirements, plus," He motioned to Tyr who was standing next to him, "I have a real demon at my beck and call. So I would watch your tongue around me, _mighty_ chief."

Soram stepped down from his pedestal and walked up to Astrid and Hiccups cage, "And to start, I think this beautiful creature will do wonders in my bed," He stroked her cheek through the bars. Hiccup took none too lightly to this and rammed his foot into the mans wrist, and Astrid heard a satisfying crack.

Soram howled in pain, "You bastard! How dare you assault a god?" He fumed. He stomped back to the throne, "Bring the girl to my chambers immediately! I want these ingrates out of this room, now!" The cage porters stepped forward, but stopped at a wave from Tyr.

"My god Soram, I ask a question of you." he said, bowing in front of the throne.

"What is it Tyr?" Soram barked, annoyed. A servant was already rubbing his wrist like he was a child.

"These vikings have thrice insulted you since your glorious arrival here. They are not worthy to call themselves your servants. When you got here, you spoke of a reward for me,"

Soram actually looked a little interested, "Really Tyr? You've never cashed in on a reward before. What would you like?"

"I would like, my god, to personally and," He flashed a lustful eye at Astrid, "Privately, administer punishment upon them for their insults." He bowed again.

Soram's eyes lit up with a maniacal and gleeful look, "Haha! Very well, Tyr! I grant you this wish! Tell us all, what will these punishments be?"

A million things ran through Astrid's mind. What was Tyr's look there? Lust? Would that be a man's punishment? He would violate all the women and just kill the men? Was it malice? Was it hate? She grew frightened of what it might be.

"Oh, mighty Soram, I think I shall indulge in a little game with them," he mused, his voice practically dripping blood already, His eyes glaring straight at her.

* * *

><p>And there's chapter 15! Tyr has become a betrayer, and apparently not for the first time in his life. And now, has Tyr saved Astrid from one horrid fate, becoming Soram's slut just to sentence her to another?<p>

I will be on vacation to see my girlfriend up north until the 5th of January, and I doubt I will be writing on this little excursion, so this is my only update for awhile! Hope you like it, and please review!

16. Glimmer of Hope

Hey guys! I'm really surprised that I got this done. Cranked this baby out in about five hours because I couldn't bear going a full two weeks without giving you guys anything at all to read! Hope you enjoy it! Been thinking about doing a chapter from Tyr's POV, so you guys ruminate on that while you read and let me know what you think!

P.S (Marcais is pronounced as such: Mar-kay)

**HTTYD **belongs to Dreamworks.

**Ingrid **belongs to Ahoykailee.

* * *

><p>Hiccup sat in the cage holding Astrid close, with a satisfied feeling in his chest. That slime Soram had wanted to plant his seed in her! The very thought of Astrid being forced to take that man's root sickened him, and he had acted entirely on instinct: protect her. He had rammed his foot as hard as he possibly could into Soram's wrist, injuring him, but to what extent Hiccup didn't know. He only hoped that it hurt like Jormungand's venom.<p>

The feeling of protection and finally doing something gutsy was still warm in his chest when Tyr asked for his 'reward'. Some of the ice

that floats in Berks oceans was set on Hiccups warmth. What could Tyr be planning for them?

The walk-or rather, ride- back to the side chamber had been done in silence. None of the villagers said much of anything. Once all the cages were in place, and all guards gone, they erupted.

"That's my boy!"

"An act worthy of a viking!"

"You showed him how we treat fools!"

They would have swarmed him if they could, "It was nothing, he wanted to hurt Astrid, and I won't-or I'll try to not- let him do that." Hiccup said. Astrid giggled in the corner of their cage and waited till he had finished to wrap him in a tight hug and kiss. He returned it willingly and deeply, ignoring the quiet oooing of the entire village.

Their dinner arrived not in the usual fashion. Slaves brought their dinner to them tonight, and these men seemed to be far nicer than their superiors. They talked to the villagers and gave out extra bread and water, even handing Hiccup and Stoick some cheese.

Hiccup decided to try and strike up conversation with someone on the outside. Maybe, if his lucky stars aligned perfectly, he could hatch a scheme to get them out.

"Hey...where are the guards? I thought they didn't let you guys bring us food and such." He asked an older man and his younger partner. The old man laughed, "Well, that rabble won't be in any state once they start drinking. On every island, at the night of the reveal, the army parties like no tomorrow. They'll all probably be too drunk to do anything until two days from now." he replied, handing more water to Hoark and Spitelout. His accent was incredibly interesting. Some of his words were shortly pronounced and some long, and his tongue was used quite a bit to slide the words out.

A flare of hope fired off in Hiccups heart. Two days. Two full days with nothing but drunken morons guarding them! "Listen...I know that these are your masters and all, bu-"

"The soldiers? Oh no they aren't anything to us. Tyr is our master." the man said, laughing at the notion of the soldiers being their masters. Hiccup and Astrid visibly drooped. If these men and women held their allegiance directly to Tyr, there was no way of getting out through them. Hiccup slumped against the back of the cage, not much in the mood to talk further.

The old man flashed looks at both of them and chuckled, "Whats got you kids so down?" He croaked. "Death, maybe?" Astrid retorted sharply. The younger one hushed the old man, flashing wary looks at the doors. The old man got a look of defiance on his face, "The soldiers won't bother us at all, so shut up." He said to the younger one, who walked off grumbling something about senility.

Hiccup lay back against the cage, wondering if there would ever be a way out. Astrid crossed her arms around his neck and lay against him, her skin soft and warm. How could they finagle a way out?

"I saw what you did to Soram, young man. I silently cheered for you." The old man huffed, coming back to their cage after the rounds. Hiccup nodded and smiled, but still didn't say anything. He didn't much feel like it.

"It's been high time that Soram experience some pain. Dulls his fantasy of being a god." The old man said again, remaining by the side of the cage. It appeared that he was trying to strike up conversation, so Hiccup indulged him, "Has he never had something like that happen before?" he asked.

The old man coughed, "Dear gods, no. Usually, the Ardni will just kill everyone and be done with it, but recently, Soram has been trying to convince people that he's a god."

Hiccup absorbed this. Wasn't sure why, but he felt like it could be important. "What's your name, old one? Why do you speak so freely with us?" Astrid piped.

Tilting his head to the floor, he pulled one hand behind his back and swept the other one out wide, "Marcais at your service, mademoiselle." He said. Hiccup felt a pang of jealousy in his heart; the man, despite being old, looked very suave and professional doing that. If they survived, he would have this Marcais teach him that. That was a big if, though.

"Well, Marcais," Astrid giggled at pronouncing his name, "Can you...I don't know, fill us in about these people?" It was an odd request, Hiccup figured. They were killers, through and through. To him, that was all they needed to know.

Marcais eyed her carefully. Silently, Hiccup hope that he spoke, because if he turned around and went to Tyr, things could get messy. Fast. He called over all the other slaves and they scurried off after a quick chat. He returned to their cage, "Let me ask you something." he said. Hiccup turned and looked at Astrid, questioningly. She was shaking her head at him, whispering something...

"Shoot," Hiccup said, ignoring Astrid, and he knew that he earned a painful punch for it, but it wouldn't come now. Marcais broke off a hunk of bread and took a bite out of it. "What did Master tell you during his time here?"

The question wasn't what Hiccup had been expecting. To tell the truth, he wasn't sure that it mattered. He and Astrid spent the next hour recounting all the things Tyr had told them. About the ritual, Antenati, speaking to their ancestors and all that. They told Marcais about the Shike and the constant barrage of lectures on honor. Hiccup knew that Astrid particularly felt hurt by those charades. For awhile, she had begun to think that Tyr was extremely honorable. Ha. Not anymore.

When they finished, much of the village was sleeping, only them and Marcais were awake. His face was hard and his eyes harder, "Tyr..er, Master, told you all of that?" he asked. Hiccup nodded, unsure why the man looked like he was about to commit suicide. He blew out a long sigh, "Well, you know more than any other island before. The fact that he actually told you his real name immediately is a good thing."

What the hel? Tyr actually telling them that his name is Tyr was a _good_ thing? "Uh, Marcais?" Hiccup groaned. Marcais looked at him with a look on his face that said shoot. "How is being in this situation a fucking good thing!?" he yelled. He hadn't meant to yell at an old man just for telling them the truth, but the complete destruction of his far too brief hope had left him frustrated. Marcais looked ready to answer, but Astrid shushed him, "Don't ask how I know this, but Tyr is coming!"

Hiccup rounded on her, "How in hel would you know?"

"Shut up, Hiccup! Marcais, what's going on here?" Said the man they had just been talking about. Marcais quickly averted his eyes to the ground and shuffled away from the cage, dropping his hunk between the bars, "They were asking about you, Master..." he stuttered.

Tyr eyed his slave malevolently, "Whatever, just get back to the house. I need to talk to you and the rest of your people. Get Milaki too."

Marcais bowed quickly, his previous suave gone entirely, and he practically sprinted out as fast as his old legs could carry him. Tyr turned a sharp eye on Hiccup. His silver eyes burned holes in Hiccups facade, and he wilted.

"What have you been wondering about, eh?" he asked, faking sweetness. Astrid was the first to reply, "We were asking him why you're such an ass hole!" She said sharply. Tyr stared her down fiercely, "Somehow I doubt that," he muttered in an annoyed voice. Hiccup decided to take the reins from his angry partner, "Tyr...Marcais told us that you had never even told a target village your real name. Why did you tell us? What was different?" Hiccup hoped that is direct approach to the truth would yield results. In a way, it did.

"Why did you try to convince your father that dragons could be trusted?" Tyr's answer confused Hiccup right off the bat. To be frank, he hadn't expected anything close to what he was just told. Tyr didn't wait for an answer and walked off, grumbling something under his breath.

"What does that mean?" Astrid mumbled, pulling Hiccup away from the front of the cage and into the back of it. The distance was only about two feet, but the front of the cage was illuminated by the torches. The back was not. He scooted back until he was sitting just in front of Astrid, who sat up on her knees and started kneading his shoulders. He felt her soft lips press against his neck as he pondered the answer. Pondering. Pondering. Ok, her lips are starting to feel really good right about now. Hiccup decided to leave the pondering for another time and twisted himself around, catching her lips lightly. It was the type of teasing brush of the lips that sent her into a frenzy.

However, it must have been the cage or the inevitable loom of death that suppressed her. She took his kiss in stride and sank into his chest. _Dammit_. He thought. _Thought things might get spicy._

Not that he was only thinking about sex at that time. The idea of never having it again was terrible, and if he was going to go out, go out with a bang.

"What are we going to do, Hiccup?" said a soft voice one cage over. It was Ruffnut, "How are we going to get out?" Hiccup thought hard about how he could possibly answer Ruff to get her spirits out of the dirt. She had been a shaking mess ever since day one, after witnessing Vrack's death. "We'll just have to wait and see when an opportunity presents itself, Ruff. Nothing we can do from in here, right now." He kicked himself after the final syllable. That was a terrible thing to say!

"Well, I know that out of all of us...you're the one who gets everyone out. Always. Its been...special to me, having someone like you around." Ruff said from the darkness. She bade him goodnight and he returned the wishes with incredulity in his voice. Such sensitivity from one of the Thorston twins was unheard of, but Hiccup welcomed it. Ruff had never voiced a yay or nay opinion of him before, and he was glad to say that her first was much needed. Her words gave him warmth, and he pulled Astrid into him more before attempting to go to sleep.

It felt like he had only been asleep for ten minutes before the slaves came in with torches and breakfast. The villagers groaned and moaned while they stretched aching muscles. While having flat bottoms, the cages gave no chance for a comfortable spot. Hiccup's own shoulders were going to have permanent ruts in them from leaning against the bars all night. Astrid was just peachy though. She always wormed her way into leaning against him, making a human pillow for herself. Don't get the wrong idea though, he would have protested if she didn't use him for a pillow. He just never knew that being a pillow was so painful.

As he worked his eyes open, he searched among the slaves serving them. A pang of guilt screamed into his mind when he saw that Marcais was not among them. While the serving was taking place, four soldiers walked into the chamber. Two of them stumbled and tripped on each other, while the other had fallen on the way in and was crawling around. They were too drunk to even walk. Damn the gods for Hiccup not being able to get a key to the cages.

Watching them cautiously, the slaves would shuffle wither on way or the other to give them wide berth. The front soldier, who was sober, walked up to their cage, "Hey boy! Wake up, Soram wants to see you." he barked. Hiccup felt fear creep into his heart and felt Astrid's iron grip on his shoulder. "Don't go, Hiccup! What if they kill you?" She whispered frantically. He gave her as a brave a look as he could muster, "Maybe I can find a way out!" he whispered back and shook her arm off.

"Hurry up, kid!" the soldier barked again. Hiccup slid to the front of the cage and waited for the soldier to unlock it, listening to the words of the other vikings. Most of them wished him luck, even Mildew. Big surprise there.

Stepping out of the cage gave Hiccup the opportunity to stretch his legs for the first time in days. His knee's cracked and his back straightened out with a groan. He would have taken his time, but a mailed hand pushed him, "Move it, shit stain." the guard grunted. "Keep you hands off him!" he heard Ingrid yell from her cage. He flashed a look back and smiled at the woman who would be his mother. Dear Odin. Hiccup thought. Ingrid would be his mother. The one

person that his life hadn't had since he was a little boy.

Stepping out of Meade Hall, Hiccup found that the village had gone through an intense change, and an infuriating change. All the buildings of Berk had been changed, taken over by these...soldiers. They looked more like pirates than anything else now. Every home, every store had been changed to fit the needs of these Ardni. Each home had become a barracks in which the soldiers stayed, and most of the stores were used for their original purpose; most of them. The Thorston mansion, sitting in close to the town, had a few scantily clad women dancing in front of it, calling to men and luring them in. A brothel. Hiccups mind cringed. He'd seen one on one of the other islands a few years ago with his father and had deemed it as one of the scariest places in the world.

He kept trudging through the village, listening to the horrible things these idiots were saying. Like, "Wouldn't mind a round with your blonde friend, boy!" and "Can't wait till Tyr plucks your eyes out!" and "Wouldn't mind a round with you!" The last one horrified him and he skittered past as fast as he could.

The fury built in his chest again as he entered his fathers home. The chief's lodge had been turned into Soram's harem. Silky red curtains adorned the inside of the structure, and satin pillows lay on every surface. Women that he admitted were some of the most beautiful he had ever seen lay about stark naked as if clothing was forbidden. They spoke to him in sultry tones and movements, and showed him things that made him choke. They kissed and licked each other, and Hiccup felt himself become aroused, against his best intentions.

Somebody noticed it, "Go ahead. You can have as long as you want with any one of them." Soram said, clomping down the stairs from what used to be Hiccups room. Hiccup glared at the man. Soram took his glare in stride though, and his demeanor didn't change, "You can have one, if you'd like. I'll trade you for one."

Trade?

"I will let you choose any one...no, any two of my women for your own, if," He stopped there, apparently trying to gauge Hiccups facial expression. "If?" Hiccup asked nervously. "If you give me the goddess that shares your cell." Soram said. Hiccup opened his mouth to immediately decline, but closed it again as his thoughts raged.

"You're probably asking yourself 'why is the mighty god Soram asking this of me?' Well the answer is simple. Gods pass down tenants to their servants. I made it a law within the Ardni that once property is given to a man, nobody, not even me, can take it back. So, unless someone in prior ownership of the property, meaning you, gives it to me, I cannot do anything about it. I could kill Tyr, but...lets not talk about that,"

"Would she be...one of these?" Hiccup asked. Every single ounce of morality and honor in his body shrieked at him while he said this.

"She is far too beautiful to be a lowly whore. She will be my wife, and bear me strong sons to carry on the pure bloodline." Why was

Hiccup actually considering giving Astrid to Soram? Because, Regardless of what happened to him or the rest of the clan, she would live on. Whether she would escape was not a question. She would. And she would be alive, which was all he wanted for her.

Hiccup was knee deep into making a decision when he heard some yelling outside. It continued, Soram giving the door an annoying look. That was until the guard outside came through the door.

The women screamed and all shuffled to one corner, maybe less out of fear and more out of the fact that it was as cold as Jotunheim outside.

Stepping over the shattered remains of the door was Tyr, "Soram! Why is it that I hear that you're trying to steal my property?" he yelled. Soram gave the man a cruel stare, but Hiccup saw something interesting. Soram had flashed his eyes at the wall directly behind Tyr, where his sword hung on the wall, the black crystal at the top shimmering in the torch light. When Soram had tortured Tyr in Meade Hall, he had been using that crystal to do so. Now that Tyr was between him and the crystal, Soram looked like the peasant and Tyr was the king. "I was asking her owner if he would be so kind as to give her to me Tyr, as our law permits!"

"Well Soram, maybe you should remember that Hiccup is not the owner, anymore! The girl is mine!" Tyr yelled again, stomping back out, kicking the shreds of the door. Hiccup knew that the door had been thick oak, so for Tyr to put a guard through it would be an amazing energy output.

Soram threw something against a wall and muttered something which Hiccup only caught the end of, "...wish I could kill you, Tyr..."

Thinking about how people generally spoke, he believed that the sentence began with 'I'. So, Soram and Tyr didn't see eye to eye. Interesting.

"Why is that man so smitten with her? With your people? Eh?" Soram asked, giving Hiccup a malicious stare. Hiccup shook his head, honestly. He had no clue what lured Tyr to them, why it seemed like he and Astrid had a greater bond than any others. Hiccup had noticed it over the last few weeks. Quite often, now that he thought about it, Astrid would stop mid sentence and look somewhere. Without fail, Tyr would appear at that exact spot soon after, if not immediately.

Hiccup was wondering about when he could actually leave. The guard that had escorted him there was in no shape to be doing anything except drooling into the wood, and Soram was not paying attention. While Hiccup looked around, he saw something on the floor. A key! Their cell key! The guard must have had it knocked away from him when Tyr put him through the door!

Kneeling, he snatched it up and fainted like he was retying his boot. That was when Soram must have had a eureka moment, "Wait a moment...move it boy! I'm taking you back to your cell." He said slowly. Hiccup was far too happy to oblige. Odin was with him indeed, and had delivered the key to the cells! He assumed that it was a master key because it was the first damn key he had seen.

After a quick trudge back through the village turned pirate port, Soram shoved Hiccup back into the cage, shut the door and closed the padlock. Astrid had been waiting frantically and if not for Soram's presence, might have smothered him.

Soram gazed into her eyes, like he was trying to get a feel for her soul. Then a slow, deep throated chuckle emanated from him, "So...that's why he's latched onto you. The weak fool." he droned. Hiccup slanted his eyes. What about Astrid made Tyr want to hang around. Soram didn't explain his statement, but walked away laughing.

"What was that all about?" Astrid asked, staring at the receding cape. Hiccup shook his head, "Not sure. Soram said something about why Tyr is so smitten by you and then took me back here."

Astrid scoffed, "Not that! Why did they take you!" she groaned. Nice job Hiccup. Act like a blooming idiot, why don't you. "Oh, Soram wanted to ask me if I would tr-" He stopped. He had never answered Soram, partly because he felt that Tyr had made his answer for him.

"Asked you what?" Astrid pressed, watching the doors. Hiccup sighed and braced himself for the worst, "He asked me if I would trade you for two women from his harem." There he went. Diving straight from the shore into the deep end. Astrid's eyes bored into him like an eagle, "And your answer was?" her voice was icy; she was daring him to say what he had actually thought about.

He put his hands up in front of him, but regretted it. It had to be the number one Hiccup move that said "Your going to hate me for this, but don't hit too hard".

"If I could keep you ali-" He didn't finish as her fist cracked against his jaw, banging his head off the bars and knocking him out cold.

Tyr stomped back to his quarters. Soram was pissing him off with his constant bid to get Astrid. Like he was going to let that happen. Slamming the door and trudging up the stairs into the slightly familiar room, he found Marcais stoking the fireplace that had been installed inside it at some point in the past. "Master, I brought you fish from the docks. The other rations are not off the ships yet." Marcais said, bowing. Tyr waved his hand at the old man, "You don't have to call me master, Marcais. How long have we known each other?"

"Seventeen years, sir. Since you became Commander of the fleet." Marcais answered.

"You know all my secrets?"

"Yes sir."

"Then you know me better than anyone else alive. I will say it again; you don't have to address me formally when we're in this house." Tyr finished. It was all true. Marcais had been given to Tyr when he had come aboard with the fleet, at the tender age of five. After the most painful three days in his life, he had been lumped with Marcais, and

the old man had listened to all his raving, crying, bitching, venting, everything. Tyr sighed and looked at the plans on his desk. The scouts had drawn out a map of the entire island, including the cave on the far side where Tyr had spent a great deal of time. A long black line cut off the back chunk of the island from the front, where the village was. He was building a great fence, to keep his quarry inside when the hunt began.

"Marcais, I want to ask you something serious." Tyr said, rubbing his eyes. Marcais stopped stoking the fire and stood ready.

"Marcais, If I let go of the mark, what do you think would happen?" The question drove straight through Marcais' carefully built demeanor, striking the man's heart deeply. The fear from the first time he ever saw it was clearly plastered on his face. "Obliteration, sir." he answered shakily.

"Thought so." Tyr answered drearily. He was still scared to death of it, and every time that bastard Soram got close to that sword, it could come out again. He shook his head and thought of other things. Tomorrow, the shelves would go up in the cage chamber, and tomorrow night.

The hunt begins.

* * *

><p>There it is! I apologize if there were a few obvious mistakes, but I was a bit rushed cuz I gotta leave for the airport an its 6 AM! Please read and review and tell me what you think about a Tyr POV chapter!<p>

17. Metamorphosis

Hey guys, long time no update! THis is a short chapter from Tyr's POV, I apologize because not much is revealed here in way of his intentions.

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><p>"Stop being fucking lazy there!" Tyr yelled at some men who lolled around some barrels by the dock, passing a bottle of rum between them. One of the men who was larger than the others scoffed and spit on the ground, "Whatever, Tyr." he retorted. The other men laughed and kept on chugging away. Oh boy. Time to set an example. Again.<p>

Tyr settled his mind and nerves. In order to use weaponry effectively, one must calm himself and feel the flow. Weapon skill is no measure of strength or agility, or even blood thirst; it is based upon whether you can 'feel' your weapon or not. Whipping out a long silver throwing blade and flicking it with perfect aim, Tyr nailed the mans arm to the the dock scaffolding.

He yelped and gripped the handle of the knife, but it held frim in the wood. The men around him stared as the blood slowly leaked down his arm and dripped onto the dock. Tyr walked up and grabbed on the

hilt of the blade. "What did you say?" Tyr asked calmly as he twisted the blade, listening gleefully as the muscle and bone of the arm tore and cracked.

The man grunted and swore. The knife was about a foot long and balanced perfectly. It bit deep into the wood, preventing any chance the soldier had of removing it. "Soram will kill you!" he said through gritted teeth. Tyr laughed, "Oh, I think I'm more valuable to Soram than you are." he said and gave the blade a final twist before ripping it out of the dock and the arm.

The soldiers of the army-calling them soldiers made Tyr choke- didn't like him, at all. Tyr was younger than ninety percent of them, yet controlled more power than sometimes even Soram. This was because of his background as a Keeper. Keepers were trained to fight from the age of one and were easily the best fighters in the South. Tyr had met some people here in the North, however, whose skills rivaled his own.

One side point though. Keepers took an oath, in blood, that they would never kill, except to protect the secret. For Soram, it was an infuriating barrier to the people he had wanted to assimilate into the army as his shock troops.

The wily man soon convinced Tyr that power and wealth were all he needed to be happy, and presented the young Tyr with a reason to fight for him. Obviously, Tyr took the bait. As the Ardni swarmed over their island, Tyr watched as his family and friends were taken captive or killed, with no remorse or mercy. He had begged with Soram to spare his family, and just one other. Just one. And because of that one person, Tyr found himself on this island, in this situation. Dammit.

As he stalked toward Meade Hall, or Soram's Throne Room as it was now dubbed, Tyr fingered the headband he wore. The silken thing was far more comfortable than the cotton one he had stolen from Astrid's house all those weeks ago, and it didn't chafe his forehead. All throughout his life, he had never worn a headband, then he started around three years back. It had been a gift from her, and he had worn it ever since.

His mind tore from his memory as he walked into the Hall. Soram sat upon his golden seat, choosing today's whore from the crowd dancing in front of him. None were Berkian villagers, as Soram saw most of them as disgusting rabble. This was a daily routine and it never ceased to amaze. The things Soram would make these girls wear were outrageous, and then sometimes he wouldn't let them wear anything at all. They would be made to dance for hours, and if one stopped for any reason, even for a second, Soram had her executed.

A cruel custom, but it meant that the women who remained were slim and firm from having to perform for their lives. Tyr scoffed and strode over to where the cooks were serving up breakfast. If Soram did anything in his life to benefit the people who called him God, it was the food. The chefs that traveled with them were experts, and the food they served was exquisite. Tyr wasn't too focused on what he took though; it wasn't for him.

The spiced chicken and grape wine he took was for two people specifically; the leaders of Berk. The villagers hated him. That much

was certain. They might even hate him as much as they hate this goddess Hel. Who knew? Probably Hel herself. Maybe he would ask her when the villagers sent him there.

Tyr knew that he would die on this island. He had made peace with that fact. He would die here, and his afterlife would be no laughing matter. He had never gotten the chance to explain himself to his ancestors, and they would not listen to him when he tried. He carried the crystals that held them, but they blocked him out. The only person who had ever listened to him was dead for all he knew. She had listened to him and believed him, even tried to help him control himself a bit.

Shaiya had been the one person Tyr could trust. She knew his secret and didn't fear him because of it, and they had fallen in love. She had been one of the soldiers, but cut from a different cloth. She wasn't a merciless killer. She had been a soldier, through and through. Professional, disciplined and for the most part, fearless and peerless. She was a beauty among shadows, if you will.

Oh, and another thing. She looked exactly like Astrid. That was why Tyr was so partial to the Berkians. When Soram had discovered the secret relationship between Tyr and Shaiya, he had taken her somewhere. Soon, the men started saying that Soram raped her and then killed her on an island they had stopped at years ago. The long throwing dagger that Tyr kept with him always was a gift from her that he watched over dearly.

A twitch in the back of his head alerted him. Something was up with Astrid. Something had set her mind ablaze, and Tyr felt her sorrow acutely. Walking fast, he entered the chamber where they were being held and immediately saw what was wrong. Hiccup lay unconscious in the cage with Astrid with a cannon ball size bruise on his head.

"What happened here!?" he yelled, sprinting up to the cage. Hiccup was breathing, albeit raggedly, and Astrid's knuckles on her right hand were red and swollen. A quick mental summation of what lay before him answered his question. Hiccup had returned from Soram yesterday, said something and been knocked out for it.

But those two loved each other. What could possibly set them against one another? Astrid herself sat shivering in the corner of the cell, rocking slightly. "Go away, Tyr. You're the last person I need right now." She mumbled.

She was weak. Her normal defiant, headstrong, survivalist attitude was a thing of the past. Her scuffle with Hiccup, while Tyr doubted was very physically straining, must have cost her mind dearly. Deciding that he would not gain any insight from Astrid, he moved on to greener pastures.

A few cages away, Gemeye sat staring at the exchange. Tyr discovered in his time there that Gemeye had a soft spot for Hiccup. Or rather, she had a spiteful spot for Astrid. She would talk.

"What happened over there, girl?" he asked her. She got a triumphant look in her eye before answering, "Hiccup came back from wherever and said something, and Astrid belted him for no reason. Doesn't look like he's safe over there. Bring him here and I'll take care of him."

the girl said, slanting her eyes at Astrid, who returned the glare in kind.

Tyr scoffed, "I don't give a shit about your petty love triangle. He stays where he is."

Gemeye huffed and crossed her arms. Tyr didn't like her; the girl was stuck up and focused on inconsequential things. A sound at the door to the chamber alerted him, "Master! The men have arrived with the items you requested." a slave called. Tyr waved him on and the doors opened wide, making way for a procession of men carrying large shelves and ladders.

"Excellent. Set them up across from the cells." The shelves were an important part of the punishment Tyr had in store for the villagers. They think they do not know fear because they are vikings. He will show them what fear truly means.

He watched the villagers unsure eyes as the shelves were nailed into place up the opposite wall. The only one not watching was Astrid, who's eyes were plastered on Hiccups form. Dammit. He needed the girl to see this for it to work properly. She needed to fall into the trap.

"...fuck..." Tyr muttered under his breath. Damn her for not being able to control her anger. "Marcais!" he called. The old man walked up respectfully, "Yes, master?"

"Take the boy to the house. See to it that he gets treatment for that." Marcais nodded and ushered over some other slaves. Tyr walked up to the cage and noticed something on Hiccups body. The small outline of a key, tucked into the belt of his tunic. Hiccup had done exactly what he was supposed to in Soram's presence: get the key. Now, Astrid needed to get it.

Opening the cage with his own key, Tyr grabbed Hiccup's tunic and yanked the boy roughly towards the door. Deftly, he latched his right thumb into the round of the key and twitched it just enough so that when he rolled the boy over, the key would be left on the floor of the cage. Lifting him, Tyr dumped Hiccup into the stretcher that had been brought and dismissed the slaves.

"Where are you taking him!" Astrid yelled, the fire suddenly back in her voice. Inside, Tyr laughed. The girl was playing his game perfectly. The key that had been on the floor of the cage was already gone, and hope twinged in her. He could tell from her face that the gears were turning inside that blonde head. Now for his next play. "Well, seeing as I'm based out of your old house, Astrid, he'll be there until I bring his carcass here for you to look at." he sneered. His attitude is what made the plan work so well; Astrid hated him, and that's what he needed.

"Don't you dare hurt him, you monster!" She growled through the cage. Tyr slammed his hand on one of the bars, "What are you going to do about it, eh? Come and save him? Going to kill me? What will that do?" he sneered again. Riling her up was unforeseen, but it might help him in the end.

"Oh, Tyr, I will kill you. I'll be doing everyone a favor." Astrid said venomously, but her game wasn't done there.

"_Kia jhere lorchi nivvi."_

Tyr whirled on the cage, his knuckles turning white against the bars, "Where did you learn that name!?" He roared. He was flaming. Not at the fact that Astrid had spoken the sacred language, but more that she had mentioned Kia. Poor little Kia.

"Oh, they're waiting for you, Tyr. They cannot wait for you to die so they can take revenge upon you."

Tyr bubbled with fury. Astrid was meddling in things of which she could not possibly comprehend. She wasn't just attacking Tyr personally. She was attacking his very being. She was attacking his lifelong sacrifice, his final service to the First Keeper.

He felt the anger boil over, and his demon took over. The bars crumpled to his grip, and he grabbed Astrid by the hair and dragged her out of the Hall amid screams of fear, anger and concern. He dragged her through the dirt roads and paths out into the woods. It was late morning, so the sun was illuminating everything.

Finally, reaching a clearing, he tossed her into the grass. He retreated to the shade of a tree and waited for her to stand. Once she did, he emerged from the shadows, his pain and anger mixing and changing him. He could see her face contort with horror through the slits that were now his eyes.

"This is what you meddle with!" He hissed.

* * *

><p>There it its! Please let me know what you think of it. I go back to school on the 7th, but this semester shouldn't be half as bad as last semester, so I will be writing regularly! Read and Review!<p>

Astrid's poke at Tyr translates as, "Kia sends her regards."

18. Shelves of Death

Hey guys! I hope you all enjoyed that previous chapter form Tyr. I know it didn't explain as much as I wanted it to, but w/e. This chapter is where things will get a bit dicey for the more sensitive readers, but things are gonna start rolling at you like tetris. I hope you like it!

* * *

><p>Finding the key on the floor of the cage had been the break Astrid was looking for. She needed something to get her hopes up after she belted Hiccup.<p>

Right after she heard about what Soram wanted, she was furious. Never had it occurred to her that Hiccup would trade her. Her anger was too much, and she hit him as hard as she could, banging his head off a cage bar. She didn't even think that Hiccup may have been explaining something to her, and maybe that thing was his rationale for not trading her.

She'd cried for a few hours and then settled into a depressed, exhausted state, unable to cry any more. Then Tyr had shown up, which was the last thing she wanted. When he rolled Hiccup, something clattered softly to the floor of the cage, and she'd found the key. That must have been what Hiccup was trying to tell her, and she'd knocked him out.

Her inner fire had come back real quick and she felt the need to take a stab at Tyr. Mentioning Kia had been a terrible choice, it appeared. Something had come over Tyr and it was frightening. She knew that Tyr was strong, but to snap cage bars like twigs? Stoick could do it, but he hadn't been successful with these cages. She was in extreme pain while he dragged her through Berk, and she had been relieved when he dumped her in the grass.

Her mind sprinted through her options. She could run. Not terribly effective even though she was pretty sure she could outmaneuver Tyr through the trees. She could turn and fight. Sure loss there, Tyr had just bent steel like it was the reeds they used to make baskets. She elected to see what the hel he was doing before proceeding.

Standing up, she winced from bruises and cuts on her legs and arms. The dirt from the paths had gotten into the wounds and they stung. She heard Tyr breathing in the shade of a tree and waited for him to emerge.

As he stepped out, her heart leaped into her throat. Tyr wasn't really Tyr anymore; his eyes were slitted and his teeth were growing thin and sharp. His voice was a hiss, "This is what you meddle with!"

What in Thor's name is going on? She wanted to move, to run, but she was frozen, staring into the dragon-like eyes of this...thing. This hybrid monster that stood before her_. _

Move Astrid. Get away. Roll. Dive. Do something! She mentally kicked herself into action. She broke for the near trees, intent on scaling into the branches and losing Tyr that way. Whatever he had turned into though was lightning fast. Before she had gone three steps she was in the scaly grip of this thing.

"What's the matter, human!? I owe you! You've released me from this pathetic Keeper!" It hissed. The scaled hand tightened on her throat, squeezing harder with each passing moment. "I'll enjoy destroying the rest of you pathetic beings!" The hiss came out, barely heard in her ears as her eyes began to darken.

A sudden rush of air filled her lungs as she was dropped. Why had she been dropped? She rolled onto her hands and knees, gasping for air to fill her lungs. As her vision returned, she saw Tyr, or what was once Tyr, rolling in the grass, screeching. At the edge of her vision she noticed two figures creeping into the clearing, holding things before them.

As her eyes cleared, she identified Marcais and Milaki as the men walking towards the writhing beast next to her, holding swords and crystals. No wait, just swords. But she saw the glimmer of crystal. No. Yes. They were carrying crystal swords.

"Back into your prison, monster! Your filth shan't curse this world!" Marcais yelled. "I will be free! I will kill you all!" The beast hissed through shrieks. Milaki pressed forward, his sword held out in front of him like a lantern, "Tyr! Fight it! Win back control, Tyr!" he yelled, trying desperately to get closer, but the monster was flailing with dangerous claws.

Astrid couldn't move as she watched this horrible being. It radiated evil like the sun gave heat. She bore terrible witness to a battle of wills going on inside it as its eyes began to flicker between slits and Tyr's eyes. It cried out like a fire was coursing through it. She could feel the pain in the back of her mind, through this strange connection she had with Tyr. It begged her to help him, compelled her to kill this monster that lived within him.

She was surprised by a strong hand that gripped the hem of her spiked skirt and pulled her back. Milaki had inched forward enough to pull her to safety. Even as she was dragged, she still watched as it hissed and clawed at the ground, maybe trying to claw its way to them via the ground. Marcais and Milaki kept pressing, yelling for Tyr to gain control, to take over. She saw it begin to slow and still, but she never saw what happened, because as soon as someone spoke his name, something struck the back of her head and she knew no more.

XXX

A very familiar roof stood above her. It was her room. She was back in her room, but something was off. It didn't look quite the same. The wood had been painted over and some cracks had been repaired. It smelled different, and it was lit quite brightly. Groaning, she tried to sit up, but a sharp pain in her head and back forced her to fall back down. The pillow that her head lay on was not hers, or anything else made on Berk. It was silk, luscious and smooth.

"Welcome back," said a voice that Astrid knew well. Kia, ghostly and white, sat near her in a chair. "Hi." Astrid croaked.

"You've been through quite a bit since our last chat." Kia said flatly, an I-told-you-so look in her eye. Astrid closed her eyes and tried not to cry, "I tried, Kia. As soon as I got out, I wanted to warn the village, but he was already in place. There was nothing I could do."

Kia stood and walked around to the side of the bed, "Don't worry about that. It's in the past. Even though you're all probably going to die." she said, her voice not projecting any sort of mock or tease. Although only having met Kia once before, in some spirit world no less, Astrid trusted her. She had fallen victim to Tyr, and soon the vikings of Berk would as well. Shit.

"Kia, can I ask you something? Something...taboo?"

"Taboo? What do you mean by taboo?" Kia asked, a curious look on her face.

"Well, I know that you and the others have banned any mention of Tyr and all, but something he did today got me thinking: what if he didn't kill you all of his own choice? What if something made him do it?"

Kia scoffed, "HA! Good joke Astrid, glad to see that your trying to keep humor alive. Tyr slaughtered us like pigs in a pen. He let an evil dragon in to kill us and just watched from outside." Her voice trembled with anger, but Astrid pressed on, "Did you specifically see him? Did you see him watching you?"

"No, but we heard Soram speaking of how he loves Tyr's new way of killing." She spat out, "It's a horrible thing to have as your last memory of the living world."

"Kia, there's something you need to kn-"

"Later, someones coming!" she whispered frantically and disappeared. Astrid's head snapped to the door to her own bedroom and awaited what terror she feared might burst through it. To her relief, it was not.

Milaki stepped through the door and looked around the room, "Were you talking to someone in here?" he asked. If anyone in this nightmarish scenario was close to being kind hearted, Milaki was one. He never swore, never jeered, and always kept a refined air about him.

"N-no...did it sound like it?" What a stupid question, Astrid. Obviously it did. Milaki gave her a raised eyebrow in response but said nothing and walked out. A sigh of relief escaped her lungs as she set about getting up. As she tried to swing her legs out, something yanked on her head. Settling back down, she wiggled her back and discovered the perpetrator. A chain ran underneath her, one end latched to her ankles, and the other on her hair. Wonderful.

"I wouldn't struggle. Your hair looks so much better on your head." Marcais said as he walked in carrying bread and water. Astrid flopped her head back down onto the mattress, defeat coursing through her. Whoever had engineered this invasion had thought of fucking everything including how much she loved her goddamn hair.

Marcais chuckled at her and set the food down next to the bed. After, he shuffled to the end of the bed and lifted the furs that covered it. From somewhere he produced a key and she felt the lock around her ankles loosen. Marcais shuffled to the top of the bed and rolled her over slightly and undid the lock in her hair. He lifted it off and Astrid caught sight of it. It was a straight bar that opened lengthwise from one end. The lock clamped it shut too tightly for anything to slide between the rectangular bars, hence why it could hold her hair.

"Eat, young one. You will need it to survive the next few days." Marcais said, gesturing towards the bread and water. As she tore into the bread, Astrid discovered that it wasn't just bread; it was a loaf that had been cut in half and filled with pork and cinnamon butter. Absolutely her favorite thing to eat. The water was also not water. The jug was filled with honeyed mead, another one of her favorites. "Why did you bring me this?" she asked through mouthfuls of food.

"Master was very specific on what he wanted fed to you." Marcais replied, biting into a plain loaf that he'd brought for himself. "Tyr told you to feed this to me? Why? I thought he wanted to kill us, not

spoil us."

"Then he has done one of his finest works ever. Astrid, how much do you know of the word betrayal?" Marcais asked, his old, tinted eyes glinting at her. Silver eyes.

"I know that Tyr epitomizes the word more than Hel herself. He betrayed us to these murderers without a second thought." Astrid answered. Even though her voice was sharp and angry, she didn't exactly feel that way. Something was going on here that went way beyond simple betrayal and death. If everything Astrid had ever learned about manipulating people was true, there was a huge game afoot. There was a disconnect between what she remembers: Kia knew one thing, Soram knew another, and Astrid knew another, with each one being different. Then toss in Tyr, Marcais and Milaki who are apparently in a different realm entirely. The rest of the Berk villagers thought something, Hiccup probably thought something else, as did Foreman. Now, the question was: Who was closest to the truth?

"Marcais. You were out there in the woods with Milaki. Can you tell me what that thing was?"

The old man's eyes darkened and his face drooped, "That, Astrid, is death. A horrid demon that infests Tyr and emerges whenever it can."

"Marcais! Enough chatter, bring her." Called someone downstairs. Astrid wanted to continue her inquiry, but Marcais mouth _sorry_ and re-chained her. Down the stairs of her home, Astrid discovered that it was inhabited by three people: Tyr, Marcais and Milaki. So it was definitely these three who were involved in their own plot.

Tyr sat in a chair, watching her descend the stairs, "You look quite spry for someone who's going to die soon." He jeered. She snarled at him and slanted her eyes. He laughed and stood up quickly, but she noticed a slightly wince and a mere moment of wobbly legs. Milaki watched him with a hawk's eye and looked ready to act should something happen. Tyr walked over and roughly grabbed her hair, "Time for you to watch as your people die and their hearts are arranged for you to see." he whispered to her.

She shook herself free of his grip and was dragged along out of the house. All around, she could see soldiers and their ilk drinking and making merry, fornicating in the streets with whores from the brothels that had been created out of the villagers' homes.

She glanced over to a small crowd that had gathered. A tall, slender woman who did not look like one of the whores was being taken from behind by a large man. Looking below her, Astrid saw armor and leather. The girl that was being raped was one of the soldiers!

She screamed and jerked, but to no avail as several men held her. One of them at the front decided to get some fun of his own and he took off his trousers, revealing a thick, hard manhood that he pressed into the poor girl's mouth. She gagged and moaned, but nothing could help her. Astrid closed her eyes and looked away. That was a fate worse than death in her mind.

A yell drew her eyes back. The woman had bitten down on the man's

penis, slicing it and spraying blood everywhere. He fell back and she took advantage of the chance. With her right hand, she punched out and disabled another of her captors, then did the same with her left hand. A kick back knocked the large man out of her and she whirled to face him.

Blood sprayed again as another soldier from the group sliced the girl open like a fish. The straight blade slid through her skin like a hot knife through butter, slicing her body open from the base of her neck to her belly button. Astrid screamed and fell back, trying desperately to shuffle away. Her eyes were glued to the gruesome spectacle and she was unlucky enough to watch the girl's intestines slid out like a squid was working its way out from inside. Her blood pooled with her stomach fluids into a disgusting, gastronomic soup on the ground and she fell in it, her eyes stuck open and horrified. The soldiers yelled at each other and another fight broke out as one was angry that he hadn't gotten a chance. What horrible people were these, to whine about that after murdering a girl who may have not been pure, but she didn't deserve that kind of death.

"...Master?" Marcais asked, his voice shaking.

"Nothing we can do now Marcais. Keep going." Tyr said, his voice grating out like he was in pain. Astrid looked up into his eyes as he picked her up off the ground. His eyes spoke of murder, but not of her. They looked pained and angry, sharp and unfeeling. A look she hadn't seen from him, ever.

The rest of the walk went silently, until they approached Meade Hall. "Shut your mouth when we get in here. Don't say a word to anybody." Tyr whispered angrily.

You ass hole. I haven't said a damn thing since I watched someone get raped and killed, thanks. They walked into the hall and found it mostly empty, a relief for her to not have to heed Tyr's warning. Like she would have spoken to anyone anyhow.

They ushered her into the side chamber where she found huge shelves arrayed on the walls. They had been firmly nailed into place and secured with ropes. The villagers exclaimed and pressed against their cages when she was walked in. There were also those who took that time to yell every conceivable insult at Tyr.

She was put back in her and Hiccups cage which had been repaired or replaced, she couldn't tell. Her heart drooped as she saw the entire thing. A certain someone wasn't there yet, and he wasn't in any of the other cages. Maybe he was still getting treatment for his head. An injury that she had inflicted in blind anger.

As the cage was locked by Milaki, Tyr's voice rang out, "Villagers of Berk, people who were foolish enough to believe me! Welcome to your final days. Your punishment for defying mighty Soram and insulting him," Astrid saw a crowd entering the room, with Soram at its head, a giant grin spreading across his face.

"Is death!" Tyr yelled finally, to a cheer from the crowd. He beckoned to someone and they approached the podium, holding a sack. He took the sack and held it up, "Inside this is the instrument which will end your lives!" From within it, he drew a long sword with a leather handle and gold filigree. The cross guard was an ornate piece

of steel that had each end carved into a bear head. That wasn't the worst thing though.

The sword was covered in gore. The once pristine blade was soaked in blood. "Your executions have already begun, pathetic vikings. The first to die out of you was the one who set your doom in motion!"

He threw away the sack to a chorus of screams and crying from the villagers. Astrid heart sank further than every before, and the tears rolled down her face with unending intent.

On the end of the first shelf, Tyr placed the blood and gore covered prosthetic that had been on Hiccup Haddock's left leg.

* * *

><p>And that ends chapter 18! Tyr has drawn first blood, and the victim is Hiccup. Astrid thinks somethings up, but now Hiccup is dead. How can she think intelligently now? Read and Review!<p>

19. Freedom

Helllllooooo there guys! This chapter was difficult to write, so I apologize if it's not up to par with good writing, but I gave it my best shot. Not terribly good at writing about apocalypse just yet. I want to pose a question. I've been thinking about writing a one shot episodic series based off of the Depth of Betrayal. Let me know if you'd like something like that!

HTTYD belongs to Dreamworks!

Ingrid and Aislin belongs to Ahoykailee!

* * *

><p>Her tears had ran out hours ago. It wasn't possible to cry anymore for her lover's death. Stoick had been inconsolable about it and even called for Tyr to take him next. That night had been horrible. Astrid was certain that nobody slept, and she definitely didn't.<p>

She wasn't ready for it. Through all the threats and the talking of their deaths, Astrid had always been a bit defiant, never believing that it would actually happen. Now, whenever she looked at the lantern lit wall directly in front of her, all she could see was the prosthetic. Sitting there, the blood shiny and dull at the same time. It was the culmination of Tyr's cruelty: He had put the shelves there so that the trophies of the dead would be arrayed for those still living to be reminded of those they didn't have anymore. Hiccup was dead. There was no sugar coat, no way around it, no amount of alcohol or ancestors or magic would bring him back to her. And to think, the last thing she did was knock him out.

The morning came, but no food or water. Through swollen eyes, Astrid watched as Tyr came in, "Did you enjoy your show? I certainly hope you di...arghh!" He grunted and dropped to one knee. Weakness? Tyr? Oh well. Weakness didn't matter when you had an army at your back.

He gasped for a few moments before returning wobbly to his feet, "Try and enjoy yourself, girl. You will be last to go."

With that, Tyr chained up and took twenty more vikings out. Their friends and families screamed, but nothing could be done. They were gone. Taken and murdered by a man who had no bottom to his macabre schemes. That night, twenty viking helmets went onto the shelves, each one blood covered.

The third day was terrible, maybe even more so than discovering that Hiccup was dead. That morning, Tyr, Milaki and Marcais had come in and taken almost two hundred people. Every elder was ushered into chains and escorted out. The children were asked to find their mothers, and when they did, they were both taken. Every child on Berk was on their way to death, accompanied by their mothers.

Astrid's body once again found tears to shed as she watched Hodr and Ingrid clapped in chains and forced to march to their deaths. The chamber was about half empty at this point, though she couldn't exactly say. Every night, Tyr returned with the helmets of the adults that he killed. It was a statement that only helmets were brought: vikings on Berk considered their helmets as their hearts. Your helmet said who you were, and at one time designated how many dragons you had killed. Astrid loved her hair too much and refused to wear a helmet, deciding on wearing her fillet instead. Her notable feature was the spiked skirt and shoulder pads. Though they weren't spiked anymore, more like studded now.

The sword was gruesome as well. The steel, crusted with blood was shiny again each night as the blood of vikings dripped off it. The smell was beginning to emanate into the cages, and it made doing anything very difficult because some with weak wills began to throw up, less at the smell of blood, but more from the smell of their families blood. The sword was left front of the room each time. It was never cleaned. Ever.

The executioner was always Tyr himself. Sometimes, he was accompanied by Milaki or Marcais, but always Tyr. Soram would appear every now and then to admire the bloodied trophies and gloat about how none of this would have happened if they would have accepted him, blah blah blah. Her whole life up to this point was like that. Blah blah blah. On looking at it, she realized that really, she had never done anything worth doing. Sure she helped Hiccup to realize what he had to do when Toothless was taken by his dad and they went to go find the dragon nest, but he was the one doing something, not her.

She had been inside the cage for a few days now, and she couldn't tell if it was day or night anymore, making sleep a strange thing. It wasn't planned at all. She just slept when her body couldn't handle anymore, and woke when her body decided to take more grief. This sleep was a difficult one though.

The fucking forge. Blown out and destroyed, as she'd seen a few times before. This dream of hers was getting boring. Everything was the same with the village, completely destroyed and burned. The ice and snow made it look like it had been that way for a long, long time. Weapons lay strewn about in various states of use: some were normal, some had the blades bent and contorted and some were shattered. Dragon scales were more frequent on the ground the closer

she got to Meade Hall. The doors of the hall were once again blown off the hinges and hung limply. _

She new what to expect when entering the hall, and it was the same. Mostly. The dead bodies still looked at her with cold, lifeless eyes and screams frozen in time. Slowly raising her eyes to the lightened alley, she saw the back of the dragon that would kill her. It was eating something, probably a person, but it hadn't realized she was there yet. Last time she was here she bumped something and made a noise. This time, she kept an eye on the ground in front of her feet in order to avoid things on the ground, and one guided her into the shadows. She stepped around bodies carefully, not sure what she intended on doing, but getting out of the light seemed like a good first idea.

_Crawling around, she tried to identify the bodies around her. The clothes, torn and mangled as they were, looked essentially the same as the ones worn normally on Berk minus a few clasps and such. As she stalked along, she noticed something gleaming in the shadows. The light from outside reflected off it and told her where it was, and crawling over, she discovered a sword. Not a normal sword, but a broadsword with a large black gem in the hilt. She grasped the handle and pulled, but the sword was stuck fast into the ground, unwilling to move. When she pulled, she moved a body and the sound alerted the demonic thing that shared the room with her. It whirled and hissed, looking like it was going to charge and tear her apart. _

_Astrid turned to face the hissing beast, intent on fighting it with every bit of power she had. The dragon didn't immediately charge though, and just crouched about fifteen feet away and hissed. The blue venom that dripped from its fangs sizzled and steamed when it hit the stone floor, giving the dragon a look much like a starving wolf. She yanked on the sword again, trying desperately to get it out of the stone, but it barely moved. _

_As soon as she couldn't get the sword out of the stone, the dragon lunged at her. She rolled away, using the sword as a push off point and got safely clear of the dragons path. It landed short of the blade and pursued her. Dammit. She had wanted it to cut itself in half on the blade immobile blade. As she sprinted to the door, intent on escaping, she froze. In the rubble of the room was Hiccup's prosthetic, the blood now brown and crusted. _

In her moment of weakness, the dragon caught her and tore her apart.

Her eyes opened slowly. This dream had not been frightening, mysterious or even bad. In fact, she wanted to have it again. It had actually told her something of use. When she finally came to meet that fate with the dragon, she knew how to fight it. The sword. The sword with the black gem in its hilt. The dragon had hesitated when her hand was on it, had waited to see if she would draw it in defense. Once she couldn't, it had attacked with all its previous fervor. The image of the sword felt familiar to her, but she couldn't place it anywhere she knew.

The grisly helmets on the shelves were getting brown now as the blood grew old on the first helmets to be put there. Hiccup's prosthetic had been brown for awhile, and it almost looked normal, other than what looked like a piece if intestine hanging off it.

She turned her head away; she couldn't bear to think anymore about it. She would see him soon, and Valhalla was a comfortable place to be for vikings. She would meet her mother, Hodr, her father and Aislin. Finally, the Hofferson clan could be together once more. Maybe Tyr hasn't done her a disservice at all.

"Harsh times, eh?"

Astrid's eyes darkened. She knew that voice, just like she knew Hel was evil. Soram had come to gloat more before she died. "What do you want, Soram?" She replied steely.

"You, Astrid. Hiccup died before he could hand you over, so I must come and get you myself." he said. Oh right. Soram wanted Astrid to be his wife, and had made several attempts to woo her. He can go and marry that girl that his men killed and left in the road for all she cared.

"Fuck off, Soram." She retorted, not looking at him.

"There is nothing left for you on this forsaken rock, girl. I'm offering you the life you cannot get any other way. I offer you the life of a god. Or at least the wife of a god." he smirked as the last words left his mouth, as if he was funny in any way. If she had the strength to punch him through the bars, she would have.

"There is more for me here than you can ever give me." She droned back, trying to sound indifferent to the situation. She hated him, hated Tyr, hated that she'd let Hiccup tell his father about Tyr's body at the shipwreck. Even so, she had nothing left here. Hiccup was dead, Hodr was dead, her mom was dead. Soon, her friends would be dead, her last uncle Foreman would be dead. Finally, when they were all gone, she would die, knowing that she could have prevented this horror.

She would rather die than be a sex slave for this monkey who calls himself a god. She would die before she would live alongside Tyr in mock comradeship.

"Well then, bitch, you can just die along with these others dogs. I'll find women more beautiful than you when we cross the great sea." he yelled and walked off, laughing and tapping the bloodied sword. Two soldiers were posted at the door to the chamber and upon seeing them, Soram chuckled, "Go and have some fun."

The men got a hungry look in their eyes and slowly walked towards her cage, taking off armor as they walked. Oh no. They didn't plan on...that's exactly what they planned on. Oh shit, shit, shit, shit, SHIT! What was she going to do now? She couldn't fight them in her state!

No, no, no, no they were getting closer. They were at the cage door now, and they had the key out. It was in the lock, turning. Her mind sprinted, trying to think of a way to escape this, but she only received a panic filled blur. Her head spun. The brave, tough, fearless Astrid was more scared now than she'd been in a long time. The yelling around her got louder and louder and made her more panicked.

Stoick sat in his cage and despite his depression, was trying his hardest to bend the bars of the cage while telling the men in no uncertain terms what would happen to them if they touched her. Of those still left alive, including Foreman, almost all yelled at the soldiers. This would be the first time any of them violated a villager. The cage door clicked open and one of the men reached for her and grabbed her foot as she kicked out.

They laughed like crows at a meal as she was pulled towards them. She shuffled desperately, trying to kick them away, but to no avail. She was going to give up and resign herself to the rape when she was showered with blood. Looking up, she screamed.

The soldier who had a hold of her foot had a sword emerging from his throat. The blade had dark red blood dripping off it and the room had fallen silent. The sword jerked back out of the soldiers neck and swung in a wide arch, cutting the head off entirely. The blood spurted out of the stump of the neck like a fountain, covering the front of the cage.

The other soldier ran off after his moment of shock, and Astrid found Tyr standing there, bloodied sword in hand, staring at her. A sound at the door prompted him to spin around, planting himself in front of the cage door.

"What is the fucking meaning of this, Tyr?" Soram screamed.

"I found your men trying to destroy my property. Our laws clearly state that defense of ones property can be carried out in any way." Tyr replied.

"Well they are my property, Tyr! What do you expect me to do about this, eh?"

"Not like you give a rats ass about any of these men, coward! You just use them until they die and then get more." Tyr spoke solidly, animatedly. Very different from his usual monotonous tone.

"Kill him." Soram commanded, and five men approached steadily, fully armed and armored. Behind them, Astrid noticed that a few more stood beside Soram, most notably Milaki. She heard a chuckle emanate from Tyr as he took a stance in front of her cage. The sword in his hand glinted in the torch light, waiting to disperse death among men.

The first man rushed with a long halberd, intent on skewering both Tyr and Astrid behind him. Tyr stood his ground until the last possible second before batting the point away, spinning and burying his sword in the mans chest, just below his collarbone. The man sputtered and gasped, and was dead when he hit the floor.

Tyr stepped back, keeping his eyes planted firmly on the men in front of him. Any move other than that would result in death. Three more from the original group of five rushed Tyr together, two wielding long sword's and one wielding a _huge _battleax. Tyr rolled away from the cage, prompting Astrid to let out an involuntary squeak. Her defender was no longer in front of her. Help!

Lucky for her though, the men chased after him like dragons after a light. The first swordsman arrived and swung viciously at Tyr but met only stone as Tyr dodged the blade. Astrid knew that Tyr had wanted

to dispatch the man there but he ran out of time.

Something was wrong. Tyr was much slower than she had seen when she sparred with him at the cove. She swore. She wanted to kill Tyr!

As he retreated from the whirling blades of the two men in front of him, entirely focused on deflecting their blows, Tyr hadn't noticed the axeman work his way behind. He was fast approaching Tyr's back now, pre-loading his arms and back to swing the giant ax with the full force of his body. He uttered a loud battle cry as he swung forth, but his swing wasn't aimed well. If he'd gotten a foot closer, Tyr would be laying on the floor of the chamber in two pieces. Instead, the blade bit deeply into his shoulder, burying itself in the bone. Tyr screamed in agony, but used the opportunity to dispatch the axe's wielder, who was too busy gloating in his act to move away from the blade.

The two men with swords looked ready to pounce on their prey when a yell from Soram stopped them, "Enough! I think Tyr has enough punishment there. Tyr! I expect the rest of the sacks of bone to be gone before nightfall in three days!" Soram yelled and stomped out. Milaki, who had a very concerned look on his face, waited until Soram had left before sprinting to Tyr, who was hunched over and breathing heavily. They exchanged words and Tyr stood and walked over to her cage, "You alright?"

His voice wasn't mean, or angry, or devilish. It was...kind, concerned, "Yeah...are you?"

Tyr ignored her and turned to Milaki, speaking low but she could still hear the words, "I've run out of time. The rest go tonight. Tomorrow morning, she goes. You and Marcais will go around noon tomorrow. Go and get Marcais and get the rest of them out of here." Tyr whispered.

Astrid couldn't fathom what she just heard. Maybe she was too exhausted to understand, but it sounded like Tyr said get them out of here, and not kill them. She was imagining things. Milaki sprinted off and Tyr looked back at Astrid, with sadness in his eyes. Stepping aside, he glanced at the prosthetic, back at her, and back at the prosthetic. When she glanced at it with him, she heard him whisper, "Shakt vor teesan." Then he stalked out, yelling abuses at the rest of the villagers. Astrid was exhausted, and she knew that exhausted people did strange things, that their senses worked in weird ways. She was frightened, tired and emotionally depraved, but she could have sworn that Tyr just said, "He is alive."

Guess all those stories about a broken heart making you hear and see things are true to the first degree. She wasn't even awake when Milaki and Marcais took the rest of the villagers silently from the hall.

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"Get up." said a stern voice. Astrid's eyes slowly opened, and she yawned. She'd fallen asleep after last night's fighting. She looked around and panicked. All the other cages were empty!

"What did you do to them? What did you do, Tyr!" she screamed, crying once more. Her fists banged against the bars of the cage, bloodying

them, but she ignored the pain.

"The same thing I did to your precious Hiccup!" Tyr yelled back at her, drawing laughs from a crowd standing behind him. He laughed along with them and opened the cage door, grabbing her arm and clamping cuffs around her wrists. The men laughed as she was led out of the chamber. She cried and tried to resist, but she was weak. She couldn't even focus on what was happening around her, only seeing blurs and all sound was muffled. This is it. The end of her life. _I'm coming mom, dad, Aislin, Hodr. I'm coming to see you._ She thought.

As they left the village, the crowd that had been following them dispersed and left. It was just Tyr and her trudging through the woods. They kept walking for almost an hour when they came upon a massive wall. It was a ramshackle construction, really it was a glorified fence. Two guards at the gate laughed, "The last one Tyr?" he said.

Tyr chuckled and clapped the man on the shoulder, "The last one, my friend."

"Can we look at the body pile?" The other soldier asked avidly. Tyr shook his finger at the man, "No, not yet. I have to get them ready for Soram to view. I can't just show him a bunch of mutilated bodies now can I?" Tyr replied.

The man laughed, "I guess not. We'll see you back at the village! Don't have to guard this place any more!"

He and the other guard marched off back towards the village. Tyr watched them until they passed beyond his vision then dragged Astrid through the gate. The path now was covered in blood and guts.

After another ten minutes, in a wide clearing, Tyr tossed her onto the dusty ground.

"Finish it, then. Finish this game of yours Tyr. I won't run." She cried and closed her eyes. She listened as the cold rasp of a blade emanated from him, and she waited for the final blow.

She felt a leather bag with several items in it drop into her lap. Opening her weary eyes, she looked at it, then up at Tyr. He pointed the blade down the path, "Walk and don't stop." he said.

"What are -"

"I'm sorry for how this had to happen. I know it was terrible on you, but it's over now." he finished, and he ran off into the trees. Astrid was alone, and free. She wasn't in a cage, wasn't in Berk. She wouldn't die, but her entire life had been destroyed. She sat there in the clearing for hours, crying and sobbing softly. She was going to pass out, she knew it. She knew it would happen every time a haze fell over her eyes. She rolled and looked at the sun, now almost right over her in the sky. Her vision was failing as she witnessed a shadow fly over her.

"Let's get her back, buddy."

* * *

><p>Chapter 19! The next chapter will explain literally everything. Everything. Think about the episodes that i talked about earlier! Read and review!<p>

20. The Truth

Hey there guys! I got wonderful feedback for the last chapter, but here is the chapter I think you've all been waiting for!

****HTTYD ****belongs to Dreamworks!

****Ingrid and Aislin ****belong to Ahoykailee!

* * *

><p>Hiccup sipped the the apple cider being made constantly by the young women in cave two. It was warm and delicious, making him temporarily forget his troublesome tasks. Getting the villagers to understand what has happened to them was difficult, and it strained his mind to think of any better way to describe it than this, "Well, you see, our friend Tyr killed us all but really didn't kill us all because he doesn't like killing. Yes, he acted like Hel for about two weeks and made you hate him, but really you shouldn't hate him because he's helping us now."<p>

Yeah, real damn convincing that is. Gods curse Tyr for making Hiccups job so hard. At the same time, gods bless him for his plan. It was incredibly complex, and Tyr had admitted that he wasn't even sure if it would work or not. That was real comforting.

Hiccup put the little mug down and smacked his lips, "That's delicious, keep it coming." he said smiling. The ladies who sat there grinding apples thanked him and he took off.

As he walked to the next set of caves, his mind ran back to the day he woke up.

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Wind. Wind? How was there wind in a cage? Hiccup opened his eyes to a bright view of the ocean. He was sitting against a tree that overlooked the ocean on the polar opposite of the island from the village. The sun was rising just above the ocean, and two shadows stood in front of him, sagely watching the sunrise.

"Do you think he'll listen to you? Why him anyway?" Milaki had spoken.

"Hiccup is my best chance. All the others act on impulse. I hope that my initial charade didn't alienate him too much, but I couldn't risk Soram discovering anything if one of the vikings acted too confident." Tyr didn't sound anything like the cruel monster that Hiccup had seen the past few days. His voice was full and sincere, like when he was nice Tyr.

"Well, whether he believes you or not, getting the girl to believe you will take the strength of Enkidu." Milaki chuckled. Tyr laughed, "And probably more than a few rolls of bandages!"

"Who's Enkidu?" he croaked. Expecting them to spin around and ask what he'd heard, Hiccup was surprised when they didn't. "Morning Hiccup. Enkidu is a giant in one of our legends." Milaki said, turning around and helping Hiccup up to his feet.

"What legend is that? I've never heard of it." Hiccup asked. He was interested in legends, and learning about one from another culture sounded wonderful.

"I'll tell you about it if we survive." Milaki said, sitting down himself.

"If we survive? You mean, if I survive."

Tyr now turned to him, "No Hiccup. Listen, you need to keep an open and...fair mind if what I'm trying to do is going to work." Tyr said, his eyes searching Hiccups own, maybe for a clue to what he was thinking. Hiccup was unsure of what to think, exactly. Was Tyr trying to kill them or save them?

"Alright." Was all he said, more because that's all he could think of to say. Tyr nodded and walked down a freshly cut path through the trees. Milaki followed and Hiccup followed after. He noticed, and placed value, on the fact that Tyr and Milaki had strode off in front, leaving Hiccup with the chance to run away should he want to. A sign of trust, and respect.

Hiccup followed them in silence, noticing that the area was becoming more familiar. When the path opened into a clearing, he recognized it. This was where he and Astrid had first been put into their cage and Milaki had taken them to Meade Hall. The area had entirely changed. There were crates everywhere, logs split in half and arranged around stone pits like benches. At each pit, there was a pile of logs split into perfect firewood, but the wood had a strange hue to it, "What is that?" he asked, maybe a bit involuntarily.

"That is wood that I have treated with a serum to make it burn smokeless." Tyr answered, but he offered no explanation further. They continued walking until a series of caves came into view. There they stopped and Tyr whispered something to Milaki, who ran off into the cave.

"Hiccup, around two months ago, you saved my life when I ran for it. I was so happy to find people who cared, people who were decent, that I ignored a terrible truth: that Soram would follow me here. Five days after you saved me, I saved one of your own, but in turn put her life and the rest of Berks in peril. I'm afflicted by a demon, Hiccup. By a foolish mistake borne from a foolish dream, I gave Astrid a piece of that demon and it would have killed her. During my time trying to devise a way to repair my mistake, I made another mistake and injured her. As soon as it happened, I discovered a way to heal her of the demon growing inside. Once she was being healed, I made yet another mistake: I mistimed Soram's arrival on the island and was forced again to try to fix things on the fly. Finally, I arrived at this conclusion: I must now do the one thing that I hate, to save those who do not deserve death. I don't ask for your sympathy, or even your friendship. I only ask that when your people arrive, you take care of them."

Hiccup thought carefully. Everything Tyr was saying made sense, other than the demon part, and infecting Astrid with it. All his common sense told him to do his best to get away from Tyr and formulate his own plan of action, but Tyr was speaking of rescuing everybody. Everybody. If Hiccup came up with some cockamamie plan, some of his friends and family might die. Tyr's help presented the opportunity to have someone on the inside.

"Alright, Tyr. What's your plan?" Hiccup asked. He was going to have to get into this partnership and like it.

"The plan is as such: With the guise that I am executing your people privately, my 'punishment' for you insulting Soram, I'll ferry them out a few at a time and bring them here. I need you to explain to them what is going on, because I know that they won't listen to me."

Hiccup thought about it. All in all, it was a solid plan of action, and it looked as though Tyr had this planned long in advance.

"What's all this for then? What with the caves? What was with the big wall around this place?" Hiccup asked. He wasn't suspicious; he just needed to know these things.

"In the crates are all the supplies you will need. Bedding, cooking utensils, weapons, cutlery, clothing, medicine should you need. The wall is to prevent any of Soram's men from interrupting my 'hunting' or from finding you. In the caves is something I think you may be missing." Tyr replied, a short smile hitting his face. He may be missing? Oh...oh gods. Toothless. The dragons!

Hiccup sprinted, or speed hobbled into the cave and saw almost forty dragons slumbering near the opening. These were all Gronkles, with the exception of a few Deadly Nadders.

"What's wrong with them? Dragon's don't usually hibernate like this. At least not this time of year." Hiccup said. The dragons looked like they were sleeping, but Hiccup and his trained eye could tell that they weren't. Dragon's don't sleep so soundlessly. Usually, farting and snoring could wake you up from a mile away, depending on what the dragon ate.

"Another thing that I learned when I was young. They are under the effects of a drug made from concentrated dragon nip extract. It has put them into hibernation, but a special one. They will only come out of it when they are fed fish, which will restart their systems." Tyr answered, admiring his work.

So this is what happened to the dragons, why they haven't been around. Tyr was drugging them and putting them in these caves. "Why did you do this? I don't see how this works along with your plan." Hiccup called as he worked among the dragons, trying to identify some of their owners.

"I did this to save them. If they were present when Soram arrived, they would have fought back. If he didn't kill them all, he would have killed most of them. And I know how your friends love their dragons, so I decided to drug them and hide them here. The cave would

protect them against the elements, and I lit fires when I could to keep their bodies warm." Tyr said. Hiccup scanned across the slumbering bodies, but noticed no dragons that he personally knew. Being mostly Gronkles, he looked specifically for Meatlug, but didn't find her. Running over to the few Deadly Nadders that lay in the other corner, he couldn't find Azure either.

"Where are our dragons? These aren't all of them." Hiccup said, confused. Where were the others? He'd only seen this one cave when they walked up. Tyr trudged through the cave to a crate, opened it and rummaged around inside. He pulled out a torch with a flint. Cracking the flint off the wall, Tyr lit the torch and gave it a moment to roar to life.

After doing so, he replaced the flint in the crate and walked over to wire that hung from the wall, "This only works once, so don't blink." He laughed. Once he had lit the wire, it burned and smoldered, but nothing amazing.

"What's so cool about...whoa!" Hiccup responded when the fire took off down the wire, lighting evenly spaced torches along the way down, revealing a massive set of caves. Dragon's slumbered all over the place, with a small path through them. The dragon's were organized and given spots of their own by species. The Deadly Nadders were just behind the Gronkles, followed by the Nightmares, with the Zipplebacks in the back of the cave. Hiccup had to chuckle a bit when he found a mound of Terrible Terrors lumped between two Gronkles. Still, he couldn't see any dragons he recognized.

"Your dragon's," Tyr began as he walked further in.

"Are over here." He finished, leading Hiccup to the very back of the cave, where another small chamber opened up. Just as was promised, Azure, Meatlug, Hookfang, Barf and Belch and Toothless lay there in quiet slumber. Hiccup ran up to his silent friend, scratching the dragons head, "Hey buddy! Hey! Toothless?" Why wasn't the dragon responding?

Hiccup was still trying to remember what Tyr had said before when a fish landed next to him, "Push it down his throat. The nutrients will jump start him." Milaki said, having entered behind them.

Hiccup snatched up the cod and yanked open Toothless jaw. _Damn, his mouth is heavy_. He thought to himself. After propping the jaw open, Hiccup pushed the fish down Toothless' slippery, slimy throat and stepped back. Waiting. Waiting. Nothing happening. Why is nothing happening?!

A sound emanated from Toothless, prompting Milaki to put a hand on Hiccups shoulder, "I'd step back if I were you."

Hiccup didn't have time to heed the warning when Toothless leaped up from his spot and rocketed out of the cave. "Where is he going?!" he sputtered frantically. "

Milaki laughed, "Your dragon's muscles have been coiled up for almost two weeks now. He'll need to stretch them out. I would advise on giving the Nightmare's a good deal of room for this little exercise." he said smiling as he watched Toothless rocket away. Milaki had an entirely different look about him than usual. He wasn't officious or

steely. He looked calm, relaxed and friendly.

"So, Hiccup. Your answer. Will you help me, or not?" Tyr said, glancing over.

"Yeah, I'll help."

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When Tyr had left that day, Hiccup admitted that he was pretty sure he just messed up again, but the next day, twenty villagers arrived at his camp, led by Marcais. His first explanation of things had been difficult, but he managed just fine. The restarting of the dragons had been more than difficult. It was chaotic because some of those who had missed their dragons terribly didn't feel like waiting their turn and just shoved fish down the throats of their dragons.

Hiccup, with the help of the now normal Toothless had made a system that minimized stress, and it worked out well. All he had to do was let one person in the cave at a time.

The day after, only ten more came. The third day, all the women and children were brought back, and it was a teary exchange. The children couldn't possibly know the difference, so most of them just carried on their merry way, but a few of the older ones needed some talking to.

He smiled inwardly. When Astrid's little brother Hodr had walked through the trees with his mother and saw Hiccup, the little boy ran up and jumped in Hiccups arms, yelling , "Uncle Hiccup! Uncle Hiccup!" Ingrid had embraced the two of them in tears. Hodr had no clue what was going on because he was too young, "Mommy, why are you crying?" he asked.

"Mommy is crying because she's happy that her little warrior is so big!" Hiccup exclaimed, tickling the little boy. Hodr giggled and took off once his feet touched ground again. Hiccup laughed as he watched the boy go, then turned back and embraced Ingrid again, "How are you?" He whispered.

Ingrid didn't say much, but smiled and weakly said, "Good, my son." The words meant the world to Hiccup, and he'd let Ingrid continue on her way.

As he came into the next lump of fireplaces, Hiccup caught sight of the Thorston family, all together once more. And for once, the twins were not fighting. Tuffnut sat aside his mother with one of his little brothers in his lap, while Ruffnut sat in her fathers lap with one of her little sisters in her own lap.

Well, well, well Hiccup thought, _It appears that the mighty Ruffnut is daddies little princess_. Ohhh yes. This was just ammunition for the next time she got on his back about something.

After checking the fires there, he sprinted back to his own camp site. The very last camp on the trail he had kept a sort of center of operations. Now that all the villagers of Berk were back, several figureheads could be found there: Hiccup, Stoick, Foreman, Ingrid, when she wasn't tending to Hodr, Marcais, who had arrived earlier

that day along with Milaki, Fishlegs and Gobber.

Despite that, it was a quiet circle of worried heads now. Earlier that day, soon after sunrise as Hiccup was scouting with Toothless, he'd found Astrid in a small clearing. The girl was exhausted, emotionally drained and horrendously dehydrated. He'd flown her back with all speed and set her up in a cot just inside one of the caves.

He'd taken the initiative and woken Azure from her drugged sleep, and after working out the kinks, the Nadder hadn't left her riders side, not even leaving to go preen or wash up. If anyone other than Hiccup or Ingrid entered the cave, the spikes were out and ready. Six hours, and the girl had not budged. She was breathing, which was positive number one. No funny business with that at least.

Walking into the camp, Hiccup smelled something delicious cooking, "What is that?" He asked, looking around. Gobber trundled up, "Welcome back, laddie! Those fires burning low?" He asked. The chore that Hiccup had departed on was to make sure that none of the fires were giving off smoke. He had fought bitterly to avoid it, but his father wouldn't hear any of it. He had wanted nothing more than to stay at Astrid's side until she woke.

Now don't get the wrong idea. This is no unnatural crystal healy place sleep. She was just sleeping off the exhaustion. The smell in the air still bugged Hiccup because he was actually pretty hungry, "Gobber, what's that smell? It's delicious and I haven't even tasted what its coming from yet!" He exclaimed, whipping his head around trying to find the source.

"You won't get any if that blasted dragon doesn't stop trying to eat it all." His father said, emerging from the cave carrying a bowl with a sizable bite out of it. Gobber chuckled, "We've been leaving soup next to the lass' cot if she wakes up while we're not here, but her dragon keeps munching it all within minutes."

Hiccup threw his hands up, "Why don't you feed her something? Something big to fill her up. Like a deer or boar." Hiccup knew that he was the dragon trainer and all that, but that just makes common sense. If a dragon keeps eating, she's hungry. Feed her something big! "My boy, where are we going to get a deer? We can't even leave the area." Stoick said, hands crossed.

"That's right, nobody leaves. Period." Hiccup said flatly. He had been adamant about his rules when the people were there. This was a task that gave him the chance to save everyone, and he would not mess it up by being timid.

"...crap.." He said to himself. He had hoped that deer would be close, but not with this much activity near them. He would need to think of a way to get Azure a meal. Everyone stood in silence thinking about it when Milaki strode over to a crate and rummaged around in it, "You all can't go around the island," He found what he was looking for and pulled it out: An odd, multi limb bow and a quiver of arrows, "But I can. How many deer do you want?"

"Uh...one?" Hiccup asked more than said. He didn't know if Milaki was like his father and could carry multiple deer in one trip. "Nadders

eat a lot, don't they?" he asked.

Hiccup nodded, "Yeah...If you can, I suppose two would be fine. They can be small too, if you can't manage bigger ones." He cringed as the last words left his mouth. They sounded like he was downplaying Milaki's ability, even though he hadn't a clue what that was. The bow was imposing though, its multiple limbs looking more like a bird wing skeleton than a weapon.

"Can that thing even fire a bloody arrow? Looks more like a pretty ornament to me." Gobber grumbled. Milaki gave the man a sidelong glance, "Pick a target," He said simply, gesturing to a stand of trees about fifty feet away. Gobber raised his eyebrows and scanned the stand, "See that knot on the oak to the left?"

Milaki scanned the trees, found the target and raised his arm. Nocking the arrow, he drew the bow, with visible difficulty. His arm grew steady and his breathing shallow as he aimed. It felt like an eternity, but soon, with a snap and whistle, the arrow rocketed from the bow at speed that exceeded any bow the vikings could make and thudded into the knot. Upon closer inspection, it was not in the center, but high, above three inches off the mark.

Milaki gave Gobber another glance and laughed at Hiccup's mentor. Gobber's jaw was flopped open and drooling. Why he was drooling, Hiccup wasn't sure. "What is this? How does it have such power? Skadi herself would be proud of such a weapon!" Gobber exclaimed, marveling at the bow. Milaki smiled, "Well, thank you. We call it a tension bow. See, the extra limbs give the arrow more power on release, effectively firing at faster velocities with greater killing power."

Hiccup made a mental note to have the man teach him how to make a this bow. "Yeah Milaki, two deer would work great." Milaki bowed and set out immediately, bringing forty arrows with him. "Why so many arrows?" Hiccup asked.

Milaki called back, "I'm not a very good archer." He heard Gobber groan as he looked again at the arrow in the tree. The arrow hadn't been perfect, but it was close enough. Hiccup turned to his mentor and laughed. Gobber stuck his nose up indignantly and stalked off grumbling something about his bows being better.

Shaking his head, Hiccup walked into the small cave and heard the instinctive growling, "It's alright, Azure, it's just me." He said for the millionth time in six hours. The dragon lifted it's wing out of the way and Hiccup gazed on Astrid's peaceful face. They had been through so much, and it seemed like the last time he and Astrid were not in a cage fighting for their lives, this was the same image. Her sleeping in a makeshift cot, covered with furs. Again, Tyr had made her this way. Anger flared up in Hiccup's chest, but he tried to think otherwise. Tyr was also the only reason that any of them were still alive. Through some form of deceit and manipulation that Hiccup could only imagine being able to pull off, Tyr had saved the lives of everyone on Berk. Other than Vrack of course.

Sitting down on the log that he had rolled into the cave, Hiccup set about waiting once more. He looked down to his left foot, where his old prosthetic stood strapped to his leg. When Tyr had recruited Hiccup to help, he'd said he needed something notable to bring back

to the village to signal Hiccup's death. At first, Hiccup suggested his tunic, but Tyr had refused that, talking about how "you can find a dirty tunic anywhere." He spoke about the prosthetic and how it would leave no doubt that he was dead. To cement the deal, Tyr had produced Hiccup's old prosthetic to use in place of the one he intended to bring back. The people who had arrived first said that the prosthetic was covered in blood and gore, but it most certainly wasn't his. Eventually Hiccup decided that Tyr must have killed animals and used their blood and gore. At least he hoped so.

Astrid rolled over in the furs. She was a fitful sleeper when her dreams got restless, so Hiccup wasn't surprised by it. As he gazed on her, he noticed glinting around her neckline. He took a closer look and found three crystals hanging from a choker that had found its way onto her neck. It wasn't there when he had found her. Had she woken up to put on some necklace and gone back to sleep? Really? No, that was a stupid thing to think, Hiccup. Get a grip. Or some mead, that might help.

He decided to go and find some, leaving Astrid in the capable claws of Azure.

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"Why the in the name of Hel am I back here?" Astrid groaned. She was back in this weird _stasi_ place again. She knew that Kia heard her, and her suspicion was confirmed when the girl appeared, "Relax, you're not dying." she said, giving Astrid a light kick on the leg. "Don't test me." Astrid snapped.

"Calm down, you're not here for healing or anything. You're here because of those." She said, pointing at her neck.

Reaching up Astrid felt a choker with crystals inlaid in it around her neck. Where had these come from?

"What are these? I didn't have these on before."

"Those, Astrid, are Keepers Crystals. They come from the mountain where we hid our secret, and they serve as spiritual channels. Through them, you can call a physical manifestation of your ancestors to the real world, you can record your own memory, a variety of things. They are extremely rare now though. One would have to go back to Mount Houlder to get chosen." Kia said in awe, staring at the three shimmering rocks.

Chosen? "Wonderful, but that doesn't tell me how I came to have them around my neck."

Kia sighed, "You're going to have to learn the legends, girlie. Keepers Crystals don't get found and worn. They choose who wears them. It means that there is something important that you have, that you need to do or something like that."

What is it with these people and riddles? Nothing is ever bloody cut and dry with them. Gods it's frustrating, "Kia! Enough with the riddles! What do I need to do?" Astrid complained. She would hurt Tyr extra badly for involving her in these ancestors and Keeper legends and all that.

"The yellow crystal in the center. Take it out and throw it over there." Kia said, pointing. Astrid reached up and pulled the crystal from its fitting, which took a lot of effort, and tossed it about ten feet away. She hadn't thrown it too hard, but it shattered when it touched ground.

Where the crystal had shattered, a pool of golden liquid coalesced. It shimmered and shifted, but remained an opaque gold. Then, as Kia and Astrid approached, the liquid churned and cleared. Astrid watched closely and saw a man dressed in armor and a billowing gold cape. His brownish skin and suave look told her that it was a young version of Soram! The man was walking towards the pool with a smug look on his face and he spoke, "Look, kid. Just get out of the way. Nothing you can do will stop me."

Whoever was looking at Soram yelled back, "You won't take it! I won't let you take it!"

Soram laughed, "And what are you going to do? How old are you, five? Six maybe? What is a little kid going to do that will stop me?"

"I'll figure it out, but you are not getting in this chamber!"

"I've already infiltrated the most tightly guarded place on the planet, beaten two of the apparently greatest fighters on the planet single handed, and made it down here without getting killed by all the traps. How are you going to stop me?"

With that, Soram reached forward past the pool and grabbed the boy that was standing in front of him, tossing him aside. As he was tossed, the pool followed the boy's vision as he hit the ground on the side of the tunnel. "Stop! Don't go in there!"

Kia stood in silence, her eyes wide, her arms trembling as her hands covered her mouth. Astrid suddenly realized that she was surrounded by people. Seven men. Seven women. All silently watching the pool in front of them.

The boy chased Soram into a huge chamber with a large pedestal in the center. Atop the pedestal sat a giant black crystal that thrummed with an unearthly life. "There he is! The Drakonicus dragon. The mightiest creature to ever fly the skies of this world. Humbled by the First Keeper over three thousand years ago and trapped in this...mundane prison. You will serve me well, dragon." Soram said to the crystal, grinning wickedly.

The blackness of the crystal hummed and vibrated, seemed to react to the voice. The boy that lay on the ground stood up and approached Soram, "You won't control it! If you let it free, which I won't let you do, you could never control it!"

"Silence, boy! It has been bested before, I can best it again!" Soram screamed. The boy fell back in fear.

Soram, having reinstated control over the situation walked up so that his eyes were mere inches away from the black of the crystal, "It's time, beast." he muttered. The pool whirled around as the boy searched for something. His vision fell upon a statue that held in its arms a long, white stave with leaf blades at each end. Astrid

immediately recognized it as the shike that Stoick had in his home, way back when.

The boy ran over and grabbed it, ripping it out of the statues grasp. He turned, and with a yell sprinted over, turning as he went, putting all his force and weight behind the weapon and smashed the black crystal. She heard Soram scream, "No!" but he was lost in the ensuing commotion. The black mist that wafted out of the crystal seeped into the boys body laying in the corner of the room. His vision was blurred, but it began to flash. It went between normal vision and another type that brightened the dark room and even saw the heat coming from Soram across the room. The man was standing there, looking at the boy, a huge chunk of pulsating crystal in his hands, an evil smile on his face.

After hearing a noise, Astrid looked around her and saw that several of the people, including Kia, had fallen to their knees, hands covering gaping mouths. The pool turned back into an opaque, dull gold, then flashed to another image. A boy, laying on the wooden boards of a ship, bodies parts lay all about him in a sea of blood. The boy was shirtless, and on his back was the boiling tattoo Astrid had seen at the lake that day. The three claws, multi colored as they were still. Once again, the pool returned to gold, then flashed up another image.

It was as if Astrid was looking through her own eyes once more. She saw Tyr, or the mutation of Tyr emerging from the shadows of the trees. Heard the hissing creature speak, re watched the horror she had felt when she thought that it would choke her to death.

Then pool flashed, and it came upon the her watching Milaki and Marcais yell at the beast, crystal swords in front of them, calling for Tyr to regain control of himself. Then, the pool vanished into thin air.

Astrid slowly pieced together her fragments of information. The tattoo, or mark or whatever it was, was definitely on Tyr's back. That was Tyr in the images. The boy in the mountain, fighting with Soram, who shattered the black crystal and was cursed, was Tyr. He had done all that to prevent Soram from releasing the Darkonicus, as it was called.

She heard weeping behind her and turned around. Kia and the seven other women sat in a circle, embracing each other and crying. Openly weeping, with no restraint at all. One of the men stepped up, his face hard and strained, "I am Hyu, Tyr's father. I have no idea how much you know of what just happened before us, but I do know that you speak our language, so tell me: do you know anything that we should know?"

She thought that the vision were pretty clear, but relented, "That mark, it's on Tyr's back. I've seen it before," She stopped when Hyu raised one of his eyes in a knowing fashion. She wanted to punch him.

"That's not why I've seen it! Anyway, he's losing control of that...that thing."

"It's called the Drakonicus, and I guess, in Tyr's state you could call it the Drakonicus Curse. Tyr himself is now the vessel that

holds the dragon from this world as was the Black Crystal before him, and if he loses control, everything will be destroyed." Hyu said, his tone apocalyptic and proud at the same time.

"Well, we have to do something about it then!" Astrid said excitedly. Why she was excited she didn't know, but it seemed like the right thing to do in the gloomy mood of this place. Hyu shook his head, "There is nothing we can do, from here. There is something you can do from out there."

"What is it? I'll do anything, what is it?" She asked quickly.

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Opening her eyes was no mean feat. She was damn tired, even though she had been in conference with Hyu and the others for almost six hours. It was pretty dark when she woke up, but she could see flames flickering not too far from where she lay. As she groaned and moved, something shifted around her. Panic rose in her, but it died as she found herself looking into the eyes of Azure, "Hey girl." She croaked, her throat dry. Azure hummed at her happily and squawked, hugging Astrid with her tail, careful to leave the spikes down. Astrid hugged Azure back as best she could. She hadn't seen the Nadder for a good long time and reunion was wonderful. After the dragon let her breath, she flipped off the furs and tried to stand. She succeeded, but her legs were wobbly. It took a few minutes to adjust and get her legs back. Soon as she could, she walked, or hobbled, towards the light of the flame outside of what she had discovered was a cave. Where she was, she had no idea. She would find out soon though.

Peaking out of the entrance, her heart soared higher than in a long time. Sitting around a fire, smiling, laughing, alive were Stoick, Gobber, her mom and most of all, Hiccup. He sat there with his old prosthetic on his leg. So that was how Hiccup had been able to live out here.

The conversation was about her actually, but she got there at the wrong time, "...she likes it long and deep and she gets intensely upset if she can't finish." Hiccup said, chuckling into his cup. Long and deep?! Can't finish?! What was he telling them? She ran out and tackled him, "What are you telling them?!" She whispered furiously on the ground. Stoick and Gobber looked stunned by her sudden intrusion, but her mother jumped up, "Astrid! Oh my, Astrid!"

She came over and threw Astrid in the most crushing hug she'd had in years. "Mom...mom!...lungs..!" she gasped, and Ingrid dropped her, "I'm just so happy you're alive!"

"Yeah...thanks mom," she coughed. Hiccup was still laying on the ground looking at her in what appeared to be a mix of fear and love. Astrid fell down onto him, lightly brushing her lips across his own, then kissing him full on.

It was the most wonderful kiss she had ever had. His lips were awfully dry and cracked, but to her they were heavenly. The lips of the one she loved, and that was more than she would ever ask for. A shuffling rang in her ears, but she ignored it for the time being, not letting Hiccup get a word in between kisses. After several

minutes of in depth tongue play, she gasped for air, as did he.

"Hi." she breathed into his neck.

"Hi." He said back.

They lay there for a few more minutes before getting up again. Stoick, Gobber and her mom had left, which was probably the shuffling Astrid had heard not too long ago. They stood and sat on the log by the fire.

"Astrid, I want to explain some things," Hiccup stuttered. She leaned on him, staring into the fire.

"Not now, Hiccup. Not now."

"Astrid?" He asked. She looked at him. She jumped as he planted another kiss on her, but she leaned into it after.

"I love you."

"I love you too, Hiccup."

* * *

><p>I hope you all like it! Please Read and Review and PM me any overbearing questions!<p>

21. The Fight Begins

Hey readers! I had a good deal of down time at my track meet this weekend, so I threw this together. It offers a bit of explanation about the Drakonicus and ends with some action. Enjoy!

**HTTYD **belongs to Dreamworks!

* * *

><p>Tyr sat in Astrid's room, staring blankly at the wall. Somehow, by some stroke of unimaginable luck, his plan had worked. Up to this point, at least. He had successfully gotten every villager out of Soram's grip and into the wilderness. Whew.<p>

He was alone in the house now with Milaki and Marcais having long ago left for the makeshift village by the caves. Marcais had refused to go, speaking of how Tyr may fully lose control if he wasn't there to help.

Marcais, whom Tyr thought was just a pathetic old man when they first met seventeen years ago was the closest thing Tyr had to a father since Hyu died. Or since Tyr killed him. No. The Drakonicus killed his father, not Tyr. Of course, how would his father have known that? Forgiveness was something his family did not hand out lightly.

Anyway. Marcais had discovered a method of calming Tyr's nerves to the point of forcing the Drakonicus back into slumber. However, that's what Marcais hated about Tyr's plan.

The plan was to lose control.

If he loosed the demon on the Ardni, there was no possible way they could fight it. If anyone can put testimony to the power of it, it was Tyr. Whenever he had a flare, which happened when the Drakonicus attempted to break free, he caught glimpses of its memory. Memory stained with the blood of thousands. Entire civilizations had fallen to the dragon's hunger. Never had there been a way found to kill it. The only method known to defeat it was by trapping it in a prison of sorts. Whether that be a crystal, a rock, a tree, whatever you happen to have around you. Or a person, if that be the case.

During his curse, Tyr had become intimately aware of the dragon. Of it's wants, of it's goals. What it fears, the different ways it chose to dismember its prey. Thus, in seventeen years, he had discovered how to re trap the dragon. It stemmed all the way back to when he was five and he'd broken the Black Crystal. The weapon he'd used to do it was the key. The shike. Or rather, not the shike, but the material.

Dragon bone was the one thing the Drakonicus feared most. The demon's ultimate quest was, and still is, to kill all humanity and return rule of the world to the dragons. Obviously, he would rule the planet, so and and so forth.

To solidify his quest, the dragon made an pact almost four thousand years ago with a human necromancer. He would never, ever, harm another dragon and if he did, he would pay for it in the loss of his power for short periods, usually a few days at a time. After receiving the blessing, the Drakonicus killed the necromancer. Ironical, because the Drakonicus had thought humans too stupid to discover such a weakness, but the First Keeper figured it out. He also figured out how to trap the Drakonicus in crystal.

If one is in contact with the correct type of crystal when the killing blow is struck, then the Drakonicus will be trapped there for all time, until that crystal somehow breaks. Tyr figured out how to break it, no problem. Dammit.

So naturally, if he came into contact with a dragon's bone in any way, he violates his oath and is weakened immensely for it. That was how Tyr survived breaking the Black Crystal in Mount Houdier when he was five. The dragon bone shike both broke the dragon out and weakened it at the same time. However, because Tyr wasn't in contact with the crystal, he became the vessel in which the demon sleeps. Dammit again.

Anyway, back to Marcais. The old man figured out when Tyr was ten that if he entered a state of pure relaxation, the Drakonicus who was trying to break out would be forced back into sleep. How many ways can one reach pure relaxation? Two.

Sex and alcohol.

As a result of this, as Ruffnut would say it, Tyr got 'laid' for the first time when he was eleven. An embarrassing event to say the least. More for the poor slave girl who had to do it than for Tyr, who had learned real quick what one does in that wondrous act. Time in Soram's court had shown him that much.

It was a combination event. Soram had beaten the eleven year old Tyr for some foolish reason. If he remembered correctly, Tyr had corrected the man on a sexual position that he was enjoying with one of his whores. Said Soram wasn't doing it right. In response, the warlord had Tyr beaten like a side of beef and thrown off the ship. After Marcais fished him out, Tyr was losing it in rage.

The area they were in at the time was a tranquil, misty, mountainous area, filled with shrines and warlords known as shogun. In one of the villages, Marcais discovered-and subsequently bought- a delicious drink called sake. Almost two hundred barrels of the stuff. Tyr finished three of those at eleven years old in under an hour. Then he had promptly fucked one of the slave girls brought to him and passed out on her.

He had absolutely no recollection of it, but Marcais and some of the other soldiers had said it was a marvelous show.

Sex was something he enjoyed immensely, even to this day he would enjoy a round with the right woman. Until one day when he found out the Soram was killing any girl who had sex with Tyr for fear of her bearing his child. After that, whenever a girl was brought to him shaking and in tears, he would assure her that no such thing was going to happen, throw her a feast for kings and let her spend the night in his bed. He would then proceed to drink himself into a stupor and pass out on the floor. Never again would he sentence an innocent girl to death just for a release. Still sucked not being able to have sex though.

He had thought about taking Astrid. She was an amazing woman, with beauty enough for ten others. After he discovered that he'd planted some of the Drakonicus inside her, he'd thought about it. He thought that if they were both going to die, why not have fun in the meantime. Why not? He was a man after all, and men had needs that Tyr hadn't had fulfilled for years. On retrospect, no, he wouldn't do that to Hiccup. The boy had won Astrid through very different means than usual. Just that effort alone proved his worth for her.

A banging and yelling at his door signaled the start. He sighed. He'd been trained to handle any possible situation, but killing on cold blood just wasn't his thing. However, the Ardni needed to die. It was a foregone conclusion.

He strode over to the table and picked up the shike, spinning it in his hands like an old friend. It was the on weapon Soram forbid him to use. Why? The battlestave, or any stave for that matter was the bread and butter of the Keepers. Of course, having been five when he took on the Drakonicus and spelling the end for the others, he had very little Keeper training. Marcais had given him enough tutors and masters over the years to solidify what training he got.

Almost two decades of practice made him incredibly dangerous. Taking a stance in front of the door and spinning the shike like a windmill, Tyr waited for the door to come down. He knew, or at least thought he knew, from the shouting that the Ardni had discovered his treachery and wanted to kill him first before going after the villagers. Perfect.

The door caved in as a warhammer smashed through, but its wielder had

no time to think before a leaf-blade sliced through his face, from forehead to jaw. Tyr drove his lead leg into the dead mans gut, launching him backwards into the soldiers trying to push in, injuring a few, but nothing more than that. Taking advantage of the gap in their focus, Tyr sprinted up the stairs and back into Astrid's room, where he waited patiently for his next victim. The leaf-blades hummed dimly as they spun, but their song of death would crescendo in no time when the first man crossed the threshold of that door.

The Ardni were not stupid. They knew what kind of fighter Tyr was, so they knew he'd be waiting for them. The first man to hit the top of the stairs was an archer, who immediately fired the drawn arrow. Ardni arrows were serrated and forged in the shape of an arachnid called a scorpion. The serrations, if they got into you, would tear through muscle and flesh, and the backwards facing spines prevented any effective chance at removal.

Having not expected an arrow, Tyr was slow to react. Lurching left, he still felt the cruel bite as the arrow drove into his right thigh, burying deep in the muscle. It didn't hurt; all it did was feed the rage. Rolling forward and stabbing out, the shike drove through the archers chest and into the wall, sticking and forcing Tyr to retreat when another man cut viciously at him. Backing into the room, Tyr brought his fists to bear, slapping away the clumsy sword stroke and planting six strikes in the man's side and head. Another sword swung over, missing Tyr but hitting the first swordsman. The man who had swung pushed his injured comrade out of the way and pressed, swinging harder and harder as he grew frustrated with Tyr's speed. After a high horizontal cut missed, Tyr drove his ankle into the side of the mans knee, breaking it and drawing a scream from the man. He went down, and the last thing he saw was Tyr's mailed foot crushing his throat.

Picking up the dropped sword, Tyr faced off against two more soldiers, each snickering and sneering. The first lunged forward but missed Tyr's side by a hairs breadth, burying the sword into the wooden floor as his weight carried forward. Dodging that first strike had put Tyr at a good angle for a double killing blow. As the first soldier carried past, Tyr sliced up, through his belly. As the sword sliced out of its first victim, Tyr pivoted and decapitated the second soldier, raising his kill count to five so far. A few more hundred to go.

Deciding to abandon the confines of the house, Tyr rushed forward, snatched the shike and launched himself from the hatch in the roof. He grunted as he landed on the thigh that had the arrow still emerging from it to see that almost half the Ardni had already been mobilized and were heading his way. A lightly armored soldier rushed towards him, spear leveled and looking for Tyr's gut. Batting it away was easy, and Tyr twisted while grabbing the neck of his attacker, breaking it like a twig.

This was going to be a long day. Snapping his eyes to the house on the hill near Meade Hall, Tyr was glad to see that the Soram's goliath's were gathered there. Good. Meant that Soram wasn't planning on going anywhere. And it meant that Tyr wouldn't have to face those walking boulders too soon. Perfect.

He took off at a run as arrows thudded into the dirt where he had been. While he wanted to loose the Drakonicus, just standing there

and letting himself get shot like a pincushion was not a good idea, and he wanted to kill as many of the Ardni as himself. He'd waited too long for this day to not take some personal vengeance. As soon as the dragon took control, Tyr wouldn't remember a thing. As he rounded a corner, he came face to face with a five man patrol that was making its rounds. He became a windmill of bleached white death as the shike whistled its deadly song. The first two men went down fast, Tyr's spinning fighting style confusing them.

The third axeman took a hazardous swing, but Tyr caught the head of the axe with the shaft of the shike and buried it into the wall next to them, rotated and beheaded the axe's former wielder. Ripping the axe out of the wall, Tyr threw it sideways, hoping to at least injure one of the remaining two. The ax barely even made it to them, tapping into the ground at their feet. They burst into laughter, but their laughter was silenced when Tyr's deadly attack took them over.

"I need to learn how to throw a bloody axe." he said ruefully. He knew who could teach him too. Another time. He thought as he ran on.

A few minutes and twelve kills later, Tyr stood at the head of the market place. Other than Meade Hall, it was the most fortified and dangerous place to be, because that's exactly where most of the men spend their time. At the bars and brothels that they had created out of the buildings there. Perfect for what Tyr wanted, and if he got into trouble, he would let go of the Drakonicus.

He'd shown Astrid how to kill him when the time came. He only hoped that she could interpret what he'd put into the memory crystal. Maybe her ancestors would help her. If she could show it to his, she'd be all set. There's a bummer; she's not related to Tyr, so there was no way she could see his ancestors without being in _stasi_. She needed him to get there.

His only regrets were that he would never see the results of his work, and he would never be able to explain to his ancestors what really happened. The hadn't spoken to him in any substance since about fifteen years ago. When his father, Hyu, had spoken to him when Astrid was in _stasi_ it was the first time in almost ten years.

Everything hinged on her now. Bringing the shike up and spinning it above his head, Tyr focused and walked into the market. A scorpion arrow thudded into his chest. A good start.

* * *

><p>I hope you guys like it! THE next chapter should be the theoretical peak of the story, so it may take me a bit longer to write, but no fear! I'm workin on it! I head to Virginia this weekend for another meet, so expect the chapter MAYBE next week? Please Read and Review and PM me any questions!<p>

22. The Battle

Hey Guys! I truly appreciate your patience with me and this chapter!
It was a monster, over twice as long as my previous longest chapter!
Enjoy! ENJOY ENJO0000000000YY!

* * *

><p>"Good morning, lass!" Gobber yelled. Astrid shot up from the bed in one of the caves, startled by the sudden noise. "Gobber! Don't do that, please." She groaned tiredly. The old blacksmith laughed and poured a large bowl of warm water into a wooden tub next to the bed. Calling it a bed was being generous. It was a cotton sack filled with straw, but it beat sleeping on cold hard ground. "What's the water for? I can get that just fine by myself." She asked, rubbing the sleep out of her eyes.<p>

"For you to bathe, girl, why else?" Gobber answered, laying down wool towels. "For me to bathe? In here? In front of everybody? What is wrong with you?" she said angrily, trying to keep her voice down.

"Relax, dear. We have everyone leave while someone bathes. We face a difficult time, so we must make do." Ingrid said, bringing in another bowl and pouring it in.

Astrid hushed and lay back. It had been six days since she had been found in the forest. Each day had been progressively better, with her regaining her lost strength steadily. She understood that they had to forgo some comforts to overcome this time, but bathing wasn't originally on her list of things to relent on.

"Alright, I get it. Why such a big tub though?" She asked. Ingrid tsked, "Don't be wasteful, daughter! Things will be all the easier if you share your tub!" Her mother chastised her. Okay, now she liked the idea. Oh yes, a nice warm bath with the man who held her heart tight in his grip...

"Ruffnut will be here in a few minutes." Astrid coughed into the water she was drinking, "Ruffnut?! Mom! Why not Hiccup?" she whined. Dammit. Figures that her luck would be like that.

"Astrid! Don't be vulgar. While Stoick and I have blessed your and Hiccups union, others may not react so well to a more...public display of your love. There are still traditionalists among the villagers who would look terribly onto such a display." Ingrid snipped. That was Ingrid Hofferson. Astrid could be married, have four kids and seen fifty winters, and her mother would still lecture her on decency.

A movement under the furs next to her reminded her that the man she was talking about was still slumbering next to her.

"So what am I supposed to do? Wake him up and say leave?" she asked. He wouldn't take it to heart, that much she knew, but maybe the "traditionalists" would realize that doing that would be just plain rude. Ingrid eyes bugged out, "He sleeping with you right now?! My girl, I thought you would be more sensible than that!" Ingrid hissed. Astrid was going to retort sharply, but a deep voice rumbled into the cave, "Relax, Ingrid. Our children are only acting as they feel fit." Stoick the Vast said as he strode in.

Astrid covered herself. She wasn't naked, but she was scantily clad, "Hey dad." She murmured, unsure of how the chief would react to her calling him that.

His eyes didn't shift from their kind norm, "Good morning. Sleep well, I assume?" Astrid smiled and nodded. Ingrid still sputtered like she was struggling with this information, "But Stoick! Its...improper! It looks terri-"

"Ingrid, I seem to remember that you and Aldal were caught, several times, in the middle of...penetrating...activities before you were married. Remind me how public that was?" The chief chuckled. Her mother's face tinged a deep red and she strode proudly out of the cave, "I was young then," she quipped.

Stoick laughed, "Your mother was a feisty one when she was young Astrid. If I never met Val..."

"Okay, that's great, I don't need to know." Astrid said quickly, blushing. The idea of her mom and Stoick just wasn't one she wanted to entertain. The chief laughed and walked off. Gobber, who had stayed quiet and listened now found a reason to talk, "You know, lass, I can arrange for Ruffnut to bath with someone else for you. And also, Milaki wanted to have a word when you find the time."

Astrid considered his words. Lifting the furs, she could tell that Hiccup was a far way from waking up. His borderline chiefly duties kept him up all day and most of the night. She didn't want to disturb him. "That's alright, Gobber. I can bath with Ruff. If you could, tell Milaki that I'll be around as soon as I finish my bath?"

"Will do," he said and trundled off. Relaxing now that she was finally alone, Astrid's mind ventured back to Tyr. She hadn't seen or heard from him ever since that day when he left her in the forest. As a matter of fact nobody has, not even Milaki or Marcais.

Milaki had been the villages eyes away from the safety of the caves. The ex-soldier had been the primary hunter for them, bringing in kill after kill next to non-stop. At the same time, he had been keeping an eye on the surrounding trails, making sure that no patrols ever made it to the caves. It had been news when he came back and said that he was seeing less and less patrols. Then yesterday, he hadn't seen any. According to his first hand experience with being in Soram's army, that is very unusual. _Very_ unusual.

She was concerned. Her weird mental link with Tyr was barely a twitch now, like he'd fallen off the radar completely. The only thing she felt there now was this primal hunger, like a never ending search for...something. She couldn't place it, but it definitely felt wild.

"I'm not bathing if he's in here," Ruffnut Thorston whined as she walked in. Ruff had made a marvelous recovery. Hiccup had told Astrid of when Ruff got here, she was like a child once more. Shy, jumpy, and scared to death of the shadows. Watching Vrack die made her rethink all the things that she cherished in her life. Since then though, she had returned to her normal self.

"I doubt he'll wake up. He only got into bed about two hours ago." Astrid said, stroking the chestnut locks of her sleeping prince. "How do you know when he got to bed? Did you guys get frisky? Eh? I'll let you in on a secret: doing it in public is a crazy rush." Ruffnut

snickered.

"No, actually. I knew he got into bed because he banged that steel foot on my knee." It had hurt like a bitch, and the tired Hiccup had apologized like a child after breaking their fathers favorite mead mug. She hadn't been able to inspect the impact zone, but she imagined that it was nice and purple at this point.

"Whatever, I'll leave it alone, but I'm sure that's not the only hard thing you got last night." Ruffnut finished with a wink. "I'm going to drown you." Astrid laughed and got out of bed. Whoa. Everything got cold a little too quick.

Stripping down naked, Astrid lowered herself into the tub. The warm water felt amazing on her cold skin and aching bones. Ruffnut was quick to do the same, and the two girls gave a collective "ahhhhh" as the water warmed them. Bathing with other girls was something a viking teenager got used to pretty quick so this was no awkward situation.

They scrubbed and cleaned each others backs, then cleaned themselves. After, they got a little childish and began splashing water at each other. On one of her more spirited splashes, Ruff managed to spray the sleeping Hiccup with water. They froze, and watched as he grumbled and rolled over. "Your soon to be husband is a heavy sleeper!" Ruff laughed, and Astrid laughed along with her.

The normally playful Ruff got serious, "So. Have you heard anything about Tyr? You're the last person to see him." There was no playful, teasing tinge to her eyes. Ruffnut really cared. Wow.

"No. I feel like I should go back, just to see what's going on, but at the same time not even Hiccup knows what Tyr's plan was beyond getting us out of the village."

"What's your point?" Ruffnut asked.

"My point is that I don't know if going back will ruin the plan, or complicate it any more. Tyr gave us nothing beyond 'stay here' as guidance for what he's doing." Astrid answered, massaging her sore knee. It wasn't as purple as she thought, but there was a bruise. Ruff scoffed, "Screw the plan! Just go back! It's been like a month since we've heard anything from him!"

"Actually, six days and nineteen hours, to be exact." Milaki said, walking into the cave. Astrid yelped and covered her breasts with her arms. Ruffnut on the other hand treated him as another one of the girls, not doing anything out of the norm. "Why hey there, Mil. Come to join us?" she smiled wickedly.

Mil? Ruffnut had given him a nickname? "Oh no. That's not why I'm here. Gobber told me that Astrid wanted to see me, but from the looks of things he was mistaken. Enjoying your time together, ladies?" He said, flashing a curious eye at Hiccup in the bed. If he thought...Oh hell no. "We're saving time and resources by bathing together, nothing more than that!" Astrid snapped. Milaki didn't say a word, promptly turned on his heel and motored out.

Dammit Gobber. Astrid thought furiously. She knew the man was old, but he must learn to not put words into that forge of a mind of his

and pull out some creation that he hammered in a minute. She stood up and grabbed a towel, drying herself quickly and putting her clothes back on. It was still cold and she wished that she could slide back under the warm furs and stay there, cuddling up to Hiccup.

Ruffnut did the same and bid Astrid farewell, intent on finding her brother and making some mayhem. Knowing that Milaki was expecting her, Astrid gave Hiccup a quick kiss and strode out of the cave. She thought that leaving the tub and water in there would be fine for now, so she gave it no thought. It was cold, which under any other circumstance would be normal. However, they weren't in houses with roaring fires, or feasting inside the comfort and warmth of Meade Hall. They were huddled in caves around small fires with nothing but thin furs to keep warm.

She rubbed her arms to get the blood moving, maybe granting her some warmth, but moved briskly. Not far from the cave entrance, around their own fire sat Stoick, Gobber and Milaki. They were talking avidly about something over a flank of elk that Milaki had brought back that morning.

"Wait just a minute! You're telling me that you stuff a pig stomach, sow it up and _throw _it around?" Milaki cried. Stoick laughed at him, "Yes! That's what I've been trying to tell you for the whole morning!"

"You gotta try it, it's more fun than reforging a shield for a blind man!" Gobber declared. Stoick stared at his old friend, looking entirely flabbergasted as to what Gobber's comparison could possibly mean. Milaki gave the blacksmith a conservative eye, "I can't imagine you catching many scores." He chuckled.

Gobber's jaw dropped, "Well I never! I'm the record holder for most scores caught!"

"Don't lie, Gobber. That only happens when you attach a six foot net on your hand," Astrid called. Gobber guffawed at her and went on a tirade about being the best gut-ball player in Berk. Lies. Astrid was the best, but she didn't play very often. Too busy training in the woods usually.

"Whatever Gobber. Milaki, you wanted to see me?" He took a few seconds to swallow the elk in his mouth. "Yes, yes I did. I trust your bath went well?" He smirked.

"Shut up." She answered flatly.

He gave a half hearted laugh. "Regardless, walk with me?" He began to walk off. Well, that didn't leave much doubt to his expected answer, did it? She still followed him. They walked for a while, when Astrid noticed that they were leaving the cave area. The large makeshift wall loomed in front of them before too long. "Did you see Tyr's memory crystal?"

So that's what it was. A memory crystal. "Yeah, I did. I can't believe tha-"

"You had it wrong the whole time?" Milaki finished for her. She nodded silently, feeling terrible. While yeah, Tyr played a extremely convincing game with them, the fact was this: he was innocent of all

the things they accused him of. If she had seen the memories right, which she had, then Tyr killing his family was not his fault, but the fault of his curse. Being such a young boy at the time, Tyr couldn't have been very good at controlling the Drakonicus and when it lost control, Soram had him put in a cell with his family, and he tore them apart. That reminded her of something.

"Milaki, It OK if you can't answer this, but how does Soram control Tyr? I mean, if the Drakonicus is so ba-"

"How do you know what it's called?"

Oh shit. She forgot that Kia had told her about it. Nobody living had done it.

"I, uh...see, I overheard, um, Soram? Talking about it?" She was grasping at tiny straws with that confession. Milaki regarded her with stony eyes, "Your lying. Your face says it all."

"OK, fine! I can speak to Tyr's ancestors." She grumbled. She felt like she'd let a giant cod out of the net. It had been her secret, that she could speak to them, and now it wasn't necessarily hers alone.

"Really? When then you must be related to him in some way. That's the only way you'd be able to speak to them. How on earth could you be related to Tyr?"

She threw her hands up, "I don't know! They won't even tell me and Tyr certainly didn't. Kinda not even sure if he knows." she said, frustrated. "Has anything about you changed since he got here? I mean on the inside?" Milaki asked. Weird question. It actually sounded kinda dirty.

"Well, since he arrived, I've felt this twinge in the back of my head, like a sense of him. I really don't know how to describe it." She really didn't.

"Interesting...anyway, Soram controls Tyr through his sword. Have you ever seen it?"

She had an idea, but wasn't sure, "Is it about three feet long, ivory bulls heads for the cross guard with a big black diamond in it?"

Milaki nodded, "That's the one. That big black diamond isn't a diamond at all. It's an original piece of Black Crystal, which held the demon before Tyr smashed it. Whenever Soram touches it, it, uh...not sure if you want to hear this." He stammered. What could be so bad about it? Astrid had a guy lose his head and spray blood all over her not too long ago. What's worse than that? She nodded and waited for his answer.

"It boils the blood in Tyr's veins. The pain is more than enough to induce a flare from the Drakonicus. Soram uses it to punish Tyr for being disobedient. However, the same works the other way round. If the dragon breaks free of Tyr, then the crystal will boil the dragon's blood to the point where it will retreat back to it's prison. As cruel a thing as I've ever seen, and I've seen some cruel things."

She couldn't possibly imagine that sort of pain. To have your blood actually boil? Like water? Sounds terrible.

"Anyway, that's not the reason I brought you out here. I brought you out here for that." Milaki said, pointing up into the branches on a huge pine tree. On a limb about ten feet off the ground hung a backpack. On the front was a letter. It had her name drafted on fluidly.

After retrieving it, Astrid sat against the trunk of the large tree and opened the note. It was definitely for her eyes only because it was written in Antenati. "What does it say? I cannot speak the language, but I do believe you can." Milaki said, sitting next to her.

The letter read,

Astrid,

I'm sorry for everything that I put you through, that I put your family through, that I put your people through. Nobody deserves that, and I don't expect forgiveness from you. I wanted to apologize and bring some light to your dark days. Inside this bag are a few things that you need to see. The first is Hiccup's custom prosthetic. It has something on the face of the foot that you should take a look at, should any doubts linger in your mind. Hiccup loves you more than his own life. He has tried endlessly for that entire life to please you, to make you happy, to defend you. Keep him close; he would gladly die for you if that be the cost. Open your heart, and I do believe you'll like what you see.

The second is a key. I know that you villagers trade avidly with the other islands, and you will need their help to rebuild. I also know that you have no money. In a cove near a place that I believe you call Raven's Point, I discovered a shield caught between two rocks. In the cave behind that shield I have hidden a gift to Berk.

The last is a gift from me to you, Astrid. It is something that I have guarded, and used, heavily for years. She was like you in almost every way. Keep it safe for me. Use it, if you wish. It will help you in your coming battles.

Tyr.

She read the letter again. And again. And again. She wiped away a small tear from her eye before digging further into the leather sack. She felt cold steel and pulled out the prosthetic that had sat on the shelf, bloody and awful. It was shining clean now, and it might have even been polished, but Astrid's eyes fell in awe on the flat of the top of the foot. In the steel, carved like flowing water, was a _perfect_ picture of her. The lines of her face were deep and definite, her bangs were shifted to the side and...oh my...her eyes. Her eyes were blue gemstones, set into the steel with surgical precision, no tool marks left over. The sapphires glittered in the shifting morning sun, catching the light just right. It was beautiful, and Hiccup had forged it all those months ago. _This_ is why he had insisted on putting a boot on it. He hadn't wanted her to see it, but why? She would have loved to see his creation. Just below the carving of her face was another carving of a heart with her name

in it, and a tiny blueish white jewel in the center.

Her mind wandered back to the letter._ If you open your heart_ Tyr had written. Her heart? A heart with her name in it, maybe?

She ran her finger lightly over the blue stone, marveling at how smooth it was. As she stroked over, she felt something akin to a wobble. The gemstone moved ever so slightly when she touched it, like it was loose. Playing with it some more, she decided that it _was_ loose. Odd. Hiccup didn't do imperfect work, and he must have put every ounce of his being into this foot and carving.

Toying with the stone, she pushed down, and the steel around the gem _crumbled_. She pulled her hand back in shock, panicking that she somehow broken the foot. Seriously, how does steel _crumble_ to a normal persons touch?

After her initial shock, she wiped away the pieces of steel, and found they weren't steel at all. Hiccup had worked a small chamber of rock into the foot and, through some engineering feat only Hiccup could pull off, had been designed to crumble when a person pushed the gemstone.

Wiping away the rest of the rock dust, her breath was stolen from her. Inside the chamber that had been drilled into the extra thick steel foot sat a gold, silver and blue band. At what she assumed was the crest of the ring sat a beautiful gemstone, an icy blue that sat in a silver setting.

She put her hand over her mouth; it was easily the most beautiful thing she had ever laid eyes on. Taking it tenderly, she closely examined it. The twined bands of metal and gem were the perfect thickness to not be obnoxious, but it would also not fall apart at the slightest stress. On the sides, the band was flattened and a measure rounded. The icy gemstone at the top was dull, but beautiful at the same time. The sunlight didn't reflect it, but the gem swirled like it was filled with mist. It mesmerized her, and without thinking, she slid the ring onto her finger. It fit snugly without being too tight, and she could still clench a fist. There was Hiccup thinking of every little detail in his smithing. The sides of the ring being rounded and flattened allowed Astrid to wear the ring and still make fists should she need them.

"Beautiful." was all she could say. Milaki hummed his agreement from within his chest. Hiccup must have been planning to propose to her for a long, long time. This ring doesn't look like it could have been made in short notice. She could have sat there for hours staring at it's beauty, but there were other things waiting for her. Digging further into the sack, she pulled out a large iron key. She would give it to Stoick or Foreman, someone she trusted, to get whatever Tyr had hidden in Toothless' Cove.

She was lucky when she reached into the bag for the third time. The blade on the long knife almost cut her hand when she brushed against it. Carefully locating the handle, she pulled out the knife and marveled at it. The handle was iron with a strange, rough material that was smooth and tough at the same time wrapped around it. The blade was a foot and a half long and ivory white. With her practiced hand, Astrid could tell that it was weighted for throwing. She assumed that there was a weighted rod running through the center of

the blade, giving it weight so it would fly true and bury deep into it's target. On the white blade, a name was etched. _Shaiya_.

Who was Shaiya? Tyr said that _she was like you in almost every way._ This Shaiya person must have meant a lot to him. "Milaki, can you tell me about this Shaiya?" she asked, already knowing the answer.

"The most beautiful gem in Soram's army, and one with stable head on shoulders. Shaiya showed compassion where none was called for, was brutal when situation called for, and generous always. There wasn't a man in the world who wouldn't chase her. The only man who ever caught her, literally, was Tyr. She fell from the crows nest one windy day and he caught her on the run, plunging them both over the side of the ship. She was furious that he had done it and refused to speak to him for days. Finally, he got bold and confronted her. He won her over that day, but sported many scars for it." Milaki answered, his eyes glossing over in memory.

Exactly how I would have been. She thought before Milaki continued, "She was taller than yourself with a darker complexion and had curves enough for the gods. Her blazing red hair stretched down her back and touched her ass an-"

"Ass? Milaki, since when do you talk like that?" Astrid asked, feeling a bit foolish for asking.

"Sorry, no matter how noble I am, I am still a man, and if a woman has a nice rear, I shan't restrain from calling it a nice ass." He declared proudly.

"Going back to my description. She usually wore her hair long and straight, and hated braiding it or tying it up."

The opposite of me. Astrid thought.

"However, it was dangerous to comment on her hair at any point. Physically dangerous."

A lot like me. Astrid thought. Milaki stopped, appearing to be done with his description of her. Astrid decided to ask a bit more, "So where is she? I mean, is she on Berk?"

Milaki's face grew dark and morbid, "No. She is dead. When Soram discovered the love between Shaiya and Tyr, he took her onto an island that we had landed at, raped her and killed her. It was meant to be the ultimate punishment for Tyr ever thinking that he could find someone else to be loyal to more than Soram. It turned Tyr's already dim life into a terrible existence of pathetic reasons to live."

Wow. Tyr had been through a lot in his life. And he was only twenty two years old. Astrid had barely ever left the island of Berk, and she was nineteen...actually! Her birthday had been three days ago! She was twenty! In all this fuss, she had entirely forgotten! So, in twenty years, she had done barely as much as Tyr.

Standing up, Astrid went through a mental checklist of things. She was given Hiccups prosthetic, which had what she believed was a wedding ring in it. She was given a key to something. She was given a

dagger dedicated to a long lost love. Milaki stood along with her and grinned, "That was all. Nothing else to do out here except head back to the caves."

Astrid nodded and they walked back in silence. Arriving back at the main cave, Astrid saw that there was a fuss about something. People running about with buckets of water, a furious Stoick holding back and even more furious Ingrid from a cringing and quivering Ruffnut and Tuffnut. What was going on here?

As she came near, she started to hear what her mother was yelling, "...ever do such a stupid, foolish, mindless thing ever again! Are you even aware of what he has done over the past week?! To treat him in such a way!" Ingrid was screaming. Surprisingly, Stoick was having a rough time holding the woman back, and now Astrid could see that her mother was wielding a pot. Judging from the dent in it, it must have clanged down on the chief's head a few times already.

Coming to a halt next to Gobber, Astrid observed the scene, "Gobber, what's going on? What did those two do now?"

"Oh! Lassie, you're here! Those Thorstons are in trouble now! Y'know that tub you bathed in? Well, the water got real cold, you see, and the Thorston twins over there thought it would be funny to dump it on poor Hiccu-"

"_Whaaat!?"_ Astrid screamed. She stomped past her mother and the chief, cracking her knuckles, a murderous glint coming to her eye. Tuffnut audibly squealed as he watched her approach.

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"_Mmmmm...that's nice Astrid. Right there, ohhhh yes." Hiccup groaned as Astrid kissed her way around his body on their wedding night. She had been the most beautiful thing in the world in her revealing wedding dress, and they had come home as fast as they could to go to bed._

She got down his body and began nipping at his thighs. He jumped as she bit the soft skin of his member, running her tongue along it's length. She brought her head up, ready to take him into her mouth when the roof caved in and ice water cascaded down...

"Gahhhh!" He screamed as the icy bath water careened onto him. Ruffnut cackled like a witch and dropped the tub, "Wakey wakey!" She laughed. The furs got drenched immediately, and his skin underneath froze like the water in a stream. Tuffnut poked him, "Hey there buddy! Are you cold? Huh? Haha!" The twins rolled and roared in laughter as Hiccup shivered. Getting out of bed was his first objective and he instinctively reached down to the floor to grab the prosthetic, and he froze once more.

Ruffnut stared at him humorously about ten feet away, his prosthetic hanging in her grip, "Lose something?"

"Give that back!" Hiccup half squeaked. This cold was too much for his chest, and his voice refused to get any louder. Ruffnut laughed, "What was that? I couldn't hear you!"

Enough of this bullshit. He gathered all his strength into his lungs, "Toothless!" He yelled. The black dragon zoomed from deeper in the cave to the bedside. Hiccup patted the dragon on the head and simply pointed to his nub.

Toothless immediately hopped around the bed, looking about for the prosthetic. On occasion where Hiccup woke in the morning and his limb was out of reach, he would kindly rouse Toothless and ask the dragon to get it for him. Toothless now instinctively knew what to do when Hiccup pointed to his nub. Not finding the prosthetic, Toothless widened his search radius to the cave, and Ruffnut had just stood there watched. Toothless green eyes settled on her and the prosthetic in her hand. As her eyes flashed from dragon to limb to dragon, she yelped and took off for the entrance to the cave.

Toothless was a strike class dragon for a reason. Speed. It wasn't a moment longer before he had the girl pinned and the prosthetic in his mouth. And then came the intelligence part. Toothless understood that the twins should be punished for their behavior, and after rounding up Tuffnut as well, he dragged them both back to Hiccup while carrying the prosthetic in his mouth.

>"Tha-thanks Bu-buddy." Hiccup chattered, taking the limb and putting it on. He eased out of the bed and hobbled to the cave entrance, Toothless and the struggling twins in tow. When he hit the sunlight, he saw Ingrid first, "In-In-Ingr..." He shivered as he tried to get the words out but couldn't. His mother-in-law, or soon to be, heard the noise and turned, throwing her hands up and sprinting over while he shivered. "Oh my! Hiccup what happened!? Why are you so wet and cold?"<p>

Not having the will to try and talk, Hiccup pointed to the captive twins in his dragon's embrace. He watched with cruel satisfaction as Ingrid's face grew stern with understanding, "Go sit by the fire. We'll get some warm water and clothes for you fast. I need a few minutes with these two though." She grated out.

Hiccup nodded and started to walk to the fire when another woman stopped him and told him to take his clothes off. He turned his head away from her quickly as his face heated up like a bakery oven. In front of Astrid, he wouldn't mind, but in front of a grown woman who no doubt had a husband, he was terribly unsure. She insisted, but he insisted that she turn her back for a minute. He ran over to some crates, grabbed a fresh fur, stripped down and wrapped himself in the warmth of the fur.

Now, he sat by the fire waiting for the warm tub to be filled. Several people, all hired up by Ingrid, rushed back and forth from other fire pits with water that had been warmed there. His father and Gobber sat around the fire with him, and a crestfallen pair of Thorstons sat across from them.

"..Sorry Hiccup." Ruffnut mumbled even though she wasn't under orders to apologize. Hiccup gave her a chattering smile, "It's alright I guess. I had to wake up soon anyway."

Tuffnut's face lit up, "So you're not mad? Are you going to save us from Astrid's mom?"

Hiccup laughed, "Oh no. I have no power over Ingrid. Kinda doubt even dad could stop her now." he winked at his father. Stoick picked up

the game without missing a beat, "Not even Thor could stop her. You made a mistake there, twins. Ingrid is always defensive of her children."

Tuffnut's previously bright face fell into the abyss once more, and Hiccup cheered inside. Sweet revenge. And now a chance to pour salt on the wound, "You know guys, I don't think Astrid will be pleased either..." He let his sentence run off and watched for response. While no audible response came, the faces that plastered them were more than enough.

"I think I'm still scared of her mom more." Ruffnut said. _We'll see about that_. Hiccup thought.

"So, son, what's on your agenda for today?" Stoick asked before gulping down some water. Usually he would be drinking mead, but supplies were running low, "Last night I got a complaint about somebody taking bread from the pantry cave, so I got to look into that. A few of the dragon's have been getting rowdy in the main caves, so I have to go and take them flying under the cliffs, and the last thing I need to talk to you, Astrid and Milaki about."

"I'm sure I will be involved as well?" Ingrid called as she approached. Hiccup nodded, "Of course, how could I forget you, oh furious one?" He laughed. She gave him a sharp look, but smiled nonetheless.

Sitting down calmly next to the twins, Ingrid laced her fingers together and took a deep breath. Then she exploded, "What crazy thought makes you two do something like that?! What demon possessed you to throw freezing water on a sleeping person?! Regardless of who it is!" She reached next to the fire and grabbed a pan, wielding it menacingly, "I would like to know how many bruises you want before going to bed tonight! Double it! No! Triple it!" She was advancing on them like a wolf onto two helpless sheep. Hiccup's father got up quickly and placed himself between Ingrid and the twins, "Ingrid, calm down now. We don't want any violence." He said cautiously.

All was well and good, but Ingrid banged the pan off Stoick's helmet, knocking it off, "No, I think violence is called for! This stupidity has to be stopped!"

Gobber and Hiccup laughed as the pan clanged off Stoick's head a few more times, Ingrid yelling at the frankly terrified twins. A few moments later, Hiccup heard Gobber say from behind him, "Oh! Lassie, you're here! Those Thorstons are in trouble now! Y'know that tub you bathed in? Well, the water got real cold, you see, and the Thorston twins over there thought it would be funny to dump it on poor Hiccu-"

He heard Astrid scream and could tell she was angry. She didn't even notice him as she stomped past. He knew better than to try and push his luck at a morning kiss when she got mad. Her temper was something that he would need to figure out how to live with.

Inside, he felt a pang of sympathy for the twins. His memory shot back to the first time he boldly asserted himself with her. They had gone flying that night and when they landed to camp, he had a moment when she was tired and leaning on him, waiting for their dragon's to finish getting their drink. He took a slapdash chance and kissed her.

The kiss had been great. After, she beat him senseless for 'taking advantage of her being tired' and flew off in anger. For a week, she avoided him and he thought he'd lost his chance with her, but she came round in the end and apologized.

There was a better chance of Loki giving Thor a massage at this point. The twins were completely in the cross hairs of her anger, and not moving. Ingrid and Stoick came and sat down, and the gathered four watched as Astrid beat the twins into a fraternal puddle of goop.

A few minutes later, she sat down next to him, breathing hard. "Good morning, oh furious one." Hiccup said, smiling inwardly. The description fit both Hofferson ladies perfectly. She took his full mug of mead and downed it, "Morning Hicsicle. Cold are we?" she sniggered into the mug. Looking down, Hiccup realized that his fur was slightly open and Astrid's eyes were peering down. His normally impressive partner was smaller than a roused acorn.

He furiously clamped the fur shut, "That's not my fault..." he grumbled. Astrid laughed and placed a soft kiss on his cheek, "I was only kidding you. How are you feeling? Not feeling sick are you? Stuffy at all?" Her new concern was warming. "No. Just cold. I'll feel better once I take a hot bath." he answered, snatching his mug back and filling it. It was wrong of him to have stashed this jug of mead for himself, but he now understood why his father drank too much at times. Running things took a heavy toll on the sanity.

Right on cue, Ingrid emerged from the cave with an empty bucket in hand, "Hiccup, dear! Bath is ready!" Hiccup cheered silently and ran into the cave. Dropping the fur mid run, he rolled into the wonderful water, relishing the moment that it enveloped him in its warm embrace.

"Oh...that's good." he sighed. He heard footsteps and looked over to see Astrid strolling over to him, her face glowing like the sun. His sun. She walked around the tub behind Hiccup's head and put her hands on his shoulders, "Better?"

"Much better!" he said enthusiastically. She kissed him on the head and started to knead her fingers ever so slightly into his neck. This new feeling sent shivers down his back and relaxed his sore muscles. He melted to the touch and tried to push his shoulders into her palms. "Harder, harder!" he said louder and louder. She intensified the kneading to the point that it hurt, but it was a weird kind of hurt. It felt...good. He never knew that massages would be his thing, owing to the fact that any touch used to hurt him.

More surprising was that Astrid was damn good with her hands. Obviously she was anyway because of her warrior training and fighting skills, but she knew how to knead his shoulders just right to work out the knots. It was absolutely amazing.

For about fifteen minutes, Astrid worked his back meticulously, carefully finding every knot and working it out with hands, knuckles and elbows. He grunted and groaned as she hit both painful and blissful spots. Once done, she draped over him, sweating, "Your back is as hard as the steel you work with." she chuckled, planting soft kisses on his neck. "With your man hands, you worked it out pretty well." Hiccup said.

"Ouch!" He cried as she punched his shoulder, "I do not have man hands!" She said indignantly. He waved his apology and asked her to find his clothes. After getting a staunch refusal, he wrapped himself in one of the towels that had been brought earlier and stalked off in search of clothing. He didn't have to go far, finding some old tunics in a crate just outside the cave. Once he'd gotten dressed, Hiccup wandered towards his first objective for the day.

One of the smaller caves had been deemed as the 'pantry' cave. Most of the culinary supplies were stored there, watched over by mainly Ingrid, but also by a variety of village women who were considered good cooks. Yesterday, a woman named Brutha came with a complaint of bread being stolen at night. She said that three more loaves were gone past the limit of loaves per day. Hiccup had set a quota for how many supplies could be used each day in order to maximize the life of what was in storage. Didn't help if they splurged one day and had no food for the next five.

Toothless, who had been pestering the Thorston twins, bounded over like a playful cat, "Hey buddy! Hey! You going to help me out today, huh?" It was a mock because Toothless had been helping him everyday; the dragon's help was priceless. In a good way. Most of the time.

Toothless nudged Hiccup's knee's constantly while they walked, "What is it? Why do you keep pushing me?"

Toothless just looked at him curiously, then nudged his knee again. Hiccup slanted his eyes. Most of the time he knew what Toothless wanted, but now was not one of those times. Toothless nudged him again and flashed his head around as if looking for something. Then he got close to Hiccup, bending to the ground.

Then it dawned on him. Toothless was worried about something. Something was getting him unsettled. Hiccup looked around the sky, seeing if whatever Toothless was worried about was flying about up there. Once he had searched for a minute, he began to walk to the pantry cave. A loud scream echoed from the cave that Hiccup had been sleeping in. He jumped onto Toothless, "C'mon bud! Back to the cave!"

It was Astrid's voice.

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Astrid rifled through some packs and crates, looking for supplies she might take with her. Food, extra clothes, water, anything. It would take about five hours to make it back to the village from this side of the island, and water on the way would ensure that she could stay on top of her game when she got there.

Her connection with Tyr had pulsed earlier, but not normally. A normal pulse resulted in her seeing what he was looking at. This pulse, she had looked through a dragon's eyes, at a scene of Ragnarok. Despite everything she had learned from Kia, Hyu and the other ancestors about preventing the transformation. Despite her careful timing, despite her almost foolproof plan to stop Tyr from transforming.

It had already happened.

"Astrid, what are you planning on doing?" Milaki asked, concern ringing through his voice. "Hiccup will never allow me a moments peace if I let you get hurt, or even killed."

"That's why you're taking me back." she said firmly. Milaki sputtered, "What!? This is suicide! That thing is an ancient demon, Astrid. Without a fully trained Keeper, we have a better chance of getting a date for Mildew!"

Astrid passed off his protests as fear. Not that she looked down on him for it; she was scared to death, which is where she might end up. Fingering the middle of three crystals on her choker, she got some solace. Hyu had told her that the Drakonicus was weakened by dragon bone. If she could find the shike, with a demon chasing her no less, then she had a chance.

She knew that the yellow crystal, which had reformed in her choker after she smashed it, no clue how that happened, was a memory crystal. The white crystal in the center allowed her to speak to the Ancestors if needed. On the far left of the trio was a bluish crystal that she had yet to find a use for. It seemed familiar to her, but she couldn't remember.

"Young lady, you are not leaving this cave!" Ingrid yelled, walking in and planting herself at the entrance.

"I second that!" Stoick agreed, standing next to her. Astrid cast a glance at them. Her parents, technically, stood before her. Ingrid, her biological mother, and Stoick, her father in law. What kind of daughter would she be if she disobeyed them the first chance she got?

"I'm going, guys. This has to end. I can beat this lizard. I can't tell you how, or why, but I can beat it. Please, let me go." She half begged. She didn't want to fight with them now, when she may never come back.

"Astrid, please rethink this! What will it help if you die? Eh? How will those you love feel then?" Milaki said flatly, a new fire in his eyes. She would have answered, but he kept going, "I've known some crazy people in my life, Tyr none withstanding. That thing will kill you. Period." Astrid ignored him and carried on packing essentials. In any other circumstance, she would listen to her mother, to Milaki, to Stoick. She couldn't though.

Her connection with Tyr was not a one way trail. She could tell where he was at certain times, and that meant that he could do the same. If that power still lingered in the Drakonicus, then it would follow the twitch straight to them, and everyone would die without a shred of a chance. She had to try and kill it, and if she couldn't, then the only thing leading the demon to her family and friends would also die.

She wordlessly slung the pack over her shoulder and turned to leave. Her head was bowed, so she didn't see Hiccup standing just behind her. Bumping into him, he lifted her chin and kissed her. Not the type of kiss they normally shared, but a deep, loving, caring, soft kiss. It lingered sweetly before he broke it, "I'll fly you there."

He said.

"Hiccup! How can you just let her go like that!?" Ingrid yelled, still standing at the entrance to the cave, her hands on her hips. His eyes didn't venture from hers, and she felt herself begin to tear.

"I know that once she says she'll do something, she will. Period. If not now, she'll sneak away later."

Astrid buried her face in his modest chest. She was scared to death of going. All she wanted was to stay here in safety with her mom, her friends and Hiccup. Nothing else would make her happier.

"No." She mumbled into him.

"No? No what?"

"You can't fly me there. I don't want you to." She mumbled. She didn't say it, but she was confident in her speed and ability to avoid a dragon demon. She wasn't so sure that Hiccup could do the same with his foot. He would take it straight to heart if she said it and probably do something boneheaded. He was a bonehead like that. A bonehead that she loved too much to let do boneheaded things. Bonehead.

"Well why not?" Hiccup asked.

"Hiccup, if I don't make it," Her mother gave a quiet whimper, "If I don't make it, you need to lead the rest of the villagers to safety. You have the smarts to help them. They need you." She said, looking up at him. He regarded her carefully, his hands rubbing her shoulders where they rested. "Astrid, for once. Just this once, I will listen to you. You come find me the second you get back." Hiccup said, planting a kiss on her forehead.

_Why is he being accommodating?_She thought, but decided to press her opening while it was there. She kissed him back and walked around Ingrid and Stoick, ignoring the spluttering of her mother, "Hi-Hiccup! What are you doing! You can't let her go! What if she dies!"

"Leave it alone, mom. No sense in making this harder than it is." Hiccup said.

Ingrid said something else, but Astrid kept moving. If she turned back now, she would never leave. Her fear would get the better of her. Milaki fell into step next to her, apparently intent of leading her back. When she looked up at him, she was surprised to find that he was smiling, "What's so funny?" she snipped.

"I'm ready to get this over with is all, nothing more." His wicked smile lingered a moment before disappearing.

Three hours later, it began to downpour. Milaki and Astrid found a cave in which to spend the night and spent it in utter silence. Other than the necessary words, such as who would sleep where and who would take first watch.

The next morning, they were greeted by a dreary scene. It was misty,

no doubt from the rain the night before. An hour later, they arrived at the outskirts of Berk. Or, she discovered, the ruins of Berk. Milaki bid her farewell and retreated into the forest with a snicker. Astrid glared after him. _Why is he acting funny?_ She thought. Whatever, she didn't have time for that right now. She had a demon to kill.

Stepping over the cusp of a broken wall, Astrid saw that the building, or what once was a building, was empty at the time of its destruction. That detail left absolutely zero clues as to which building she was in, but it was on the outskirts, where a lot of the production places were due to the fumes that wafted from them. The ice rain had frozen into sheets, and snowfall had covered the ground. The light snow was blown around by the wind like leaves in a storm.

She did notice was the walls were cut in long, straight slashes, not beaten down by cudgel and hammer. Moving further in, she found a wide bar with rings almost sliding off at one end and the ripped remains of a curtain or something. This all looked incredibly familiar and her *deja vu* was getting bad. As she moved past the curtain, she found a box filled with scraps of parchment, with scribblings and drawings on them. As she inspected a few, the shapes began to take form. Each parchment had a small piece of a larger item. A small curved piece drawn expertly onto hundreds of separate parchments. Then, on one of the last ones in the stack, Astrid lost her breath. These hundreds of parchments, all this planning and work, were the designs for her ring. She was in the forge.

Her dream! That's where this was from. Her eyes snapped to the mist clouds around her. Once again, she saw the massive shapes in the mist, but they were clearer. Those were masts and sails, the sails of the huge Ardni battleships moored in the harbor. They appeared unfazed, untouched by the calamity that befell the village.

Walking up the street she saw, again from her dream, the broken weapons, mangled and torn like they'd been through a lumber mill. The new detail that was not present in her dream were the bodies. Hundreds of them littered the roads. They lay in different stages of mutilation and death. A few were non recognizable, their bodies so shredded and torn that they looked more like piles of guts after gutting an elk. Her dream also left out the smell. She had to resist retching so many times between the forge and the next building up that she lost count.

The buildings looked like they'd been burned, but not by normal fire. The wood looked...melted, like something had just seeped through it. Even the stone blocks of foundations had the same marks, like molten iron had been poured onto them. Shake it off, Astrid. You're wasting time.

Taking off at a slow run, Astrid weaved through the rubble and bodies towards Meade Hall. Her dream always took her there, and that's where this battle would end. First though, she had to try and find the shike. Tyr was based out of her house and ,in fact, out of her own room. So, divining her location in the village in regards to the forge, she veered off down a side road. The bodies thinned as she approached her house, which, surprisingly enough, was almost untouched by the rubble everywhere else. The few bodies that lay around it, especially those at the door, weren't even mangled; they

had regular wounds. As she walked by, one young man had his neck broken, an older soldier at the door had a slash cutting from his forehead to his jaw

The room inside looked much the same as usual. The kitchen looked used, but everything was clean and stored neatly. The couch and chair by the fireplace had new fabric on them, but other than that were clean and undamaged. At least she wouldn't have to dig through rubble. She rummaged through all the closets and cupboards, flipped the couch and even pried up a floorboard or two. Where the hell was that stupid weapon? She bounded up the stairs, hopping over a dead man that had a hole in his chest.

Opening her bedroom door, Astrid found three more dead men. Tyr had been busy here today, or yesterday, or the day before. Rifling through her room, There was no evidence of the weapon.

"Dammit! Where is it!?" She yelled at herself. Frustrated, she paced around the room like a woman with moon blood, grumbling and cursing, when her eyes fell on the wall above her bed. Two holding pins had been drilled into it to form a weapon rack. So, the shike had been here. Well, seeing that she knew her luck was elsewhere. Running back outside, she stood at the door and looked out, trying to guess where a man like Tyr might go first. To be honest, she had no clue where he would go. How could she even think that she'd know anything about Tyr? He had masterfully deceived both the vikings of Berk and the soldiers of Soram's army.

She rethought her position. If she wouldn't know where Tyr would go normally, maybe she would know where a man intent on killing everyone here would go. Her answer came to her from her first lessons of war from her father.

Listen, my daughter. If you want to break the will of the enemy, take out their supplies. Any sort of market or commerce district would be a sot spot to strike at to cripple the enemy.

The market. How could she not think of it before! She'd wasted close to an hour dawdling around at home when the shike was probably sitting in the middle of the damn market. She descended the stairs once more and ran out the front door, leaving it ajar.

The market was actually pretty close, and she got there in minutes. Just as she had thought, standing atop a pile of bodies like the sword in the stone was the shike, it's normally bleached white leaf blades were red and crusted. This had happened at least a day ago, judging by the blood and it's brown color. This was the key, this was how the end of this nightmare would come about. It never even crossed her mind that this was way too easy. Her foot brushed aside a helmet that lay before the pile, the clanging sounding like a war horn in the quiet serenity of death that lay heavy over the market.

She stopped, frozen in place. The pile, had moved. A bare shudder, but it had moved to the right for a second and then halted. Astrid carefully walked closer, her head flicking around, searching for any sign of movement or hostility. Something caught her eye in the pile, a movement or flicker, like a light being quickly covered and uncovered.

Her steps slowed down to mere shuffles. She made sure than her strong

leg was forward so she could leap back if needed. As she inched closer, a thought crossed her mind. _What if the Drakonicus is waiting for me? In this pile?_ She began to slowly back away from it, her hand falling to the long blade Tyr had given her. The shike was right there, but if the dragon was under that pile, she wouldn't last long enough to get there.

"Don't flatter yourself, human. I don't think you're worth a trap." A hiss said behind her. She whirled to find the entirety of the Drakonicus dragon, mere feet away from her. It was exactly as it was in her dream. It's eyes were acidic green, black and white scales shimmering and long thin fangs dripping in blue venom.

"And I was right." It growled wickedly, its scaled lips parting into a toothy grin. Her heart beat faster and faster, the sweat beading onto her brow. Her legs refused to move, her eyes refused to leave the dragon's.

"Do you, _Astrid_, know how I came to be free? Do you know how Tyr finally lost the keys to his sanity?" The dragon's voice was a mix of a guttural hiss, and Tyr's voice. She couldn't possibly answer from being too scared. It laughed at her, "You, girl. Tyr tricked himself into believe that you were his bitch, Shaiya. Oh, how I hated her. She had some power over him and it suppressed me incredibly. It's been far too long since I ate something. Want to know a secret? I like full stomachs. I enjoy tasting what my prey last ate in their pathetic life."

"Yo-you're lying!" She stuttered.

"Oh, the lamb finds it's voice! Alas, it is yet foolish. For what reason do I have to lie to my next meal?" I shall savor the taste of you, girl. I was...upset, that Tyr killed your stupid people and robbed me of the chance!" It hissed again, and its legs coiled.

Astrid, Astrid, Astrid you have to fucking move! Move, stupid! With a roar, the dragon lunged at her with speed she thought impossible on this earth. Luckily, the Drakonicus' foot hit her before the fangs did, and launched her through a nearby wall. She slammed into a beam in the house with a gasp. It wasn't even a question; she _needed_ the shike. She had zero survival chance without it. She had no time to ponder her next move as the dragon clawed its way into the house, roaring and hissing all the while. Thinking quickly, Astrid grabbed an ax that lay nearby and sheathed it in her belt, then grabbed another and hurled it with a practiced hand.

It flew straight and true and dug into the dragon's shoulder, drawing a scream of pain. She smiled momentarily before the beams holding it back came down. She turned and sprinted as hard as she could out a hole in the back of the house, intent on getting some distance between the dragon and the shike, so she could double back and get it. The roaring followed her, and some god showed her favor. A blue glob of venom struck the ground next to her, immediately sizzling and melting the ground.

Shit. _Was all she could think about that. That meant no open ground. Not that she would want to go there anyway. The Drakonicus was faster than her by too big a margin to try and outrun it. She banked into another home and pulled down a jagged floorboard, wedging

it with the point towards the wall. The dragon thought her stupid, and that was her advantage right now. She could set traps, as long as it didn't see.

To anchor the board in place and give it penetrating power, she levered a large stone block against the end and tipped it to lay diagonally on the face. The weight of the block would prevent the board from being flung away when the demon came through the wall.

As she stepped away, the wall exploded and the dragon flew through it, teeth gnashing in fury. It's black blood spurted around the ax blade that was still dug into it's shoulder. If the demon had come through about a foot further left, the board would have gone straight through it's heart, but unfortunately it received only a minor slice on its leg.

"Good! I enjoy prey that fights back!" it screamed, and came ever harder. Astrid was running out of ideas, and space. The further she took herself from the shike, the more chance that the dragon would catch her unawares, and it would become the end of her. Running into the next house, Astrid saw through the shattered window that she was about sixty yards from the shike. If she could lure the dragon into one more trap, she'd have time to get there. Just one more trap. Thinking quickly, she decided to take a chance and be the trap herself. Drawing the dagger, the white blade that had Shaiya carved into it, she took a spot next to the stairs and waited for her mark. Once more, the demon burst through the near wall with vigor and noise. She got lucky again as the demon's momentum carried it past her, and he didn't look about to turn around either. He sniffed the air, "Ah, a mistake I have made. There is too much human blood in the air to smell you."

Good, she had an advantage. Those meant as much to her as anything right now. She climbed as silently as she could to the second floor of the building, reaching a huge hole in the floor directly over the dragon. It hissed and sniffed the air more, "I can't smell you girl, but I can hear your heartbeat!" It bellowed, and lunged straight upward. All she could do was jump out and ride the Drakonicus. It snapped at her with venom soaked fangs, missing just barely each bite. She got her feet firmly around it's body and raised the dagger in both hands, ready to end this feud. A sudden lurch threw her off her target, but the dagger sunk deeply into its left wing. As she fell the dagger, pulled by her weight, cleanly and completely severed the wing membrane. The dragon screamed and fell out of the sky and both of them crashed through a roof.

Magically, she was the first to recover, bouncing up and tripping through rubble as she ran for the shike. A crash from behind her sounded the dragon's approach, and she was too slow.

She felt talon's rip through flesh and cut to bone. She let out an anguished scream as her right leg burned like the noonday sun. Her teeth gritted against the pain as she tried to crawl to the shike. She must have looked utterly pitiful, but if she could make it the weapon. Only fifty five more yards.

The dragon wouldn't let her though. She felt a light claw on her side as she was flipped from her stomach to her back. Opening her eyes, she saw the dragon standing over her, wings stretched, one torn almost completely off, a triumphant glare in its slanted eyes, "You,

my dear, have proven a terrible meal, at an even more terrible cost," It veered an eye at its wing, "Now, you shall die and join Tyr in Naraka!"

Astrid screamed. As the Drakonicus' maw opened wide, drops of venom fell on her arms and shoulders, burning them even when the drops were miniscule. Her scream, however, was not audible. She didn't even hear herself do it. She opened her eyes to look at her killer. She had failed everyone. She had failed Milaki, her mom, her brother, her friends and Hiccup. This was a fate she deserved for that failure.

Shatter me. The white crystal at her neck _said_ to her. It spoke into her mind, beckoning her to break it. Why was the crystal talking to her? Whatever, she wasted no time in grabbing it from her neck and tossing it a few feet away. The dragon's head snapped over to it, but it judged the crystal as nothing. Mist rose slowly from where the crystal had landed. That was it. Astrid was going to die, and even though she had hurt the demon badly, it wouldn't be enough. Not by any means of the word. And to retaliate in the end, she broke a pretty crystal. Pathetic.

As the mist rose, something coalesced in its depths. Was it a person? No, impossible. How could a person come out of a crystal? A minute later, a tall, lanky form crashed into the dragon's side, pushing it off of her.

"Get away from it!" A man that Astrid judged was around ten years her senior. She didn't need more command and pulled herself away, towards the shike. More forms looked to be coalescing in the mists as the dragon screamed and swiped at the young man, "What is this magic!? Where do you come from!?" It bellowed.

More forms leaped from the mists and swamped the Drakonicus, diving over it, grabbing at its limbs and wings. "Astrid! Come on!"

She whipped around and saw Kia gesturing to her frantically, "I can't! My leg!" Astrid yelled back. Kia didn't even give her token scoff before sprinting over and dragging Astrid to the pile, "Quickly! Hyu and the others will distract it, but we don't have long before the crystal reforms and draws us back in! Find the Black Crystal piece! Find Soram's sword!"

Kia and Astrid began to rip bodies away from the pile that had the shike at the top, "I thought I needed the shike!" Astrid yelled, wincing as her leg throbbed. Kia didn't slow down, "You did! We didn't know that you already had a dragon bone weapon!" She replied. Already had one? But she'd only hit that dragon with one weapon...the dagger. The white long blade. It was dragon bone. The letter! That's why he wrote _It will help you in your coming battles _in the letter! It was a clue! One that she had marvelously missed the meaning of, as usual. Shaking it off, she pulled bodies out of the pile as fast as she could.

"Why do you look in here!?" A man yelled, coming over to them and helping.

Tyr would always do this to signal something as a child! The piles were always different but the meaning the same! He hid something here!" Kia yelled back. A roar alerted them, and Astrid turned to see

that the Drakonicus had shed his attackers and was charging at them, murder plastered on its face. As it leaped at them, a massive battleax swung around and slammed into its side, throwing it into a pile of rubble.

Astrid whipped her head around again and she heard the ancestors gather around her, "Who are you?" Hyu asked between pants.

"I'm her bloody father, who are you?" Aldal asked, holding the ax at the ready.

"Later you two, we've got bigger problems!" Astrid screamed as she watched the dragon break free of the rubble it had been buried under. The Drakonicus didn't charge blindly though. It paced and observed what was arrayed against it. The ancestors, Tyr's ancestors, all Keepers and Aldal Hofferson, one of the greatest dragon slayers to ever live. Astrid didn't have time right now to consider how things came to be this way, but she was grateful for it.

Aldal didn't much feel like waiting for the dragon to finish its study, "Well then beast! Come meet your fucking nightmare!" he yelled and charged. Hyu scoffed, "The man doesn't know how to fight. All the demon will do is trip him."

He was right on all counts, but Hyu had never met Aldal Hofferson. The dragon sidestepped her father, but he reached down instinctively and grabbed hold of its tail. He swung it like a child's toy and hurled it down the road. Hyu and the others gave a collective gasp of awe before sprinting down after the raging viking.

Astrid turned and rifled through the pile again. They were beginning to reach the bottom of the bodies now, and Astrid thought she saw glints of golden fabric underneath it all. Kia pulled away the final body and laying on the ground at the bottom of the pile, his own sword driven through his face was Soram. The Black Crystal piece thrummed and vibrated atop the sword's pommel. Grabbing it, Astrid yanked it, with a sickening lurch, out of its previous owner's face. "Kia! I've got the sword!"

"Kia! Kia?" Astrid looked up and around. She was alone. Her fingers jumped to her throat. The white crystal had reformed there. Kia had said they didn't have long. It couldn't have been more than five minutes, and only a minute since her father had arrived, but they'd bought her invaluable time. Wherever the Drakonicus was, it was hurting and far away, giving her enough time to find the sword and extract it.

She looked around carefully, trying to ignore the extreme pain in her right leg. Everything was quiet, as if another worldly battle had not just taken place. Normally, she would retreat into a house or the cover of rubble, but movement was not her friend. This battle came down to this moment, a one shot opportunity at victory. She would either win, or die.

Tyr had told her that anger was the worst thing to bring to a battle of any sort because it makes one be reckless, foolish. You stop thinking about strategy, mistake, about doing something stupid. He had said that this hubris afflicts everything, from gods to mortals to demons. In her sight, the dragon emerged onto the road. It was beaten, bloody and from the look it was giving her, furious. It

roared and screamed as it sprinted towards her, unable to fly after she had mangled the wing. The venom from its mouth frothed and flew, sizzling and melting anything it touched.

She closed her eyes; this looked exactly like the first boar hunt she ever went on. The group had poked and prodded the beast, backing it into a small burrow. The angered animal had careened out, charging blindly, and impaled itself on the spear that a younger Astrid carried. The power of the blow had thrown her twenty feet, but she was credited with the kill.

She knelt down and braced Soram's sword against the ground, its tip ready to draw blood. Waiting, for her chance, she began to count the steps. The world slowed down, the Drakonicus' steps falling like drum beats, setting a rhythm for her. Three strides.

Two.

One.

Zero! She planted both her palms behind the cross guard of the sword, and drove up and out as hard as she could. She felt the jerk and shudder as the blade found flesh and bone. She was driven back and sent rolling. When she came to a stop, she quickly searched. The Drakonicus was laying on its back, twitching, the sword driven through its chest, the crystal atop the pommel pulsing wildly.

"You pa-pathetic human! I will return, an-and when I do, you will regret this day!" it hissed. Then its flesh began to peel away, the scales smoking and flaring into nothing. The muscle liquified and ran in rivers of red. Soon, Astrid found herself looking at a raggedly breathing Tyr. The sword that had been in the Drakonicus' chest had also found its mark in Tyr.

His breathing was labored, his eyes glazed and staring into the sky. She crawled to his side, gasping at her own leg, "Tyr. I'm...I'm so sorry, for everything we did to you." He laughed a horrible, labored, dying laugh, "Don't be foolish. I played you all for a reason. You weren't supposed to know what you were doing." he coughed, blood covering his lips. She smiled, a tear coming to her eye.

"Tell Hiccup that I wish you two the best of luck." He said again, before erupting into a fit of choking coughs, blood spilling from his mouth. "Tyr! Tyr, stay with me!" She screamed. His hand grabbed hers, holding it tightly, "I'm sorry," he whispered. His eyes began to whiten, and his breathing slowed.

"Tyr! Tyr! Stay alive, Tyr, please!" She screamed. Her mind flashed to when she thought she was going to die. How many times had Tyr saved her from death, and now he was dying, and all she could do was scream.

An idea erupted into her head. Her hand flew to the left side of the choker and she pulled out the blueish crystal. A small leash was attached to it. She held it mere inches away from his face, and through her tears and strained voice, called out:

"_Nitrei Ortevas kiri ker aiifal,___"

Then louder.

"_Saa huy jarichi ji xexilo al wasdoi,___"_

_She screamed the last one, putting all her being and love into it, _

_Al homlk shakti azshin ji ku mejital!___"_

Tyr's eyes darkened and closed, and his breathing stopped. Astrid held the crystal close, not knowing how she would know if it worked or not. Her tears flowed freely, but they stopped.

_The crystal hummed and grew warm. It was the best sign she would get. The battle was over. Everyone was alive and hopefully, Tyr would live through __stasi__. She fell into an exhaustion driven sleep, smiling. She didn't feel Milaki come and lay a blanket over her._

* * *

><p>I hope you enjoyed that chapter! There is like, two more to completel the story, but they shouldn't be very long! Read and Review!

23. Trial and Victory

Well, this is it. This is the final chapter of The Depth of Betrayal and I will say that my eyes are a bit teary posting this. Its been a great time writing this, and I sincerely thank all the readers who stuck with this all the way through, even through that three month hiatus, Thank you so much! Enjoy!

HTTYD belongs to Dreamworks!

* * *

><p>Feeling. Do you feel things when you're dead? No clue. Naraka seemed like an awfully bright place for the land of the dead. And where were the dead people? Legends said that Naraka was crawling with the soulless bodies of those long dead, constantly hungering for the energy of the living. As far as he could tell, Tyr saw no soulless dregs coming after him like he was a piece of curried nan. He sat on a stool, cushioned seat, whatever it was, and was looking around. All this was was a wide open field. But a field with no grass, or trees or anything, even sun.<p>

"Tyr?"

The voice startled him and he whipped around, jumping back into a stance, ready to defend himself. Standing in front of him, the girl looked like a scared little puppy. His hands dropped, his eyes unbelieving of what they saw. Kia Pretor, his older sister by nine years, who died at his hands seventeen years ago.

"Kia? Where the hell am I? This isn't Naraka." he said, his own voice sounding coarse and ragged. Her face betrayed no feelings, "Is it true, Tyr? Did you take the curse willingly?" Her eyes glistened as tears came to them.

"Yeah, I did." He answered, and her open palm stung across his face.

"Why!? Why would you be so stupid, reckless and unselfish? Why Tyr!?" She yelled at him. As a child, he'd always been afraid of Kia when she got mad, but now he could only tell the truth and hope for the best, "There was no other way, Kia. I doubt you'd believe me if I told you how it happened, or how you and father and everyone else died, bu-"

"We know how we died, Tyr." Hyu said, appearing next to Kia and placing a comforting hand on her shoulder. Tyr's face contorted, "You _know_? How? You haven't spoken to me for fifteen years." he answered, a bit more roughly than he intended. It wasn't their fault that that didn't want to talk. As far as they knew, or had known apparently, he'd killed them in cold blood.

"Astrid showed us your memory crystal." Said a tall, beautiful woman with the blackest hair you'll ever see. Tyr fell to his knees, his strength flying away from him like birds on a strong west wind. His vision became misty as the tell tale signs of tears came into his eyes. He placed his palms on the ground and bowed his head, "Mother," he whispered. He had at least seen his father and Kia fifteen years ago, after they'd died. He hadn't seen his mother since the day in Mount Houder.

"Tyr. You still have not cut your hair." She answered, her face both soft and hard at the same time. He didn't dare look at her, "It covers the scars, mother." Back home, Murianya Pretor had been the warden of the Keeper training school, and the best warden in almost a hundred years. She'd also been the strictest, allowing absolutely no slip ups. She had been respected immensely before her death.

"You can look at me, child. There is much to be spoken of, but we know now that our anger with you was misplaced. There are over seventeen years of experiences to share."

Tyr got up and gave his mother a sorrowful glance, "I'm afraid that you'd find more happy company in a graveyard." Murianya strode up and held him in her arms, soon joined by both Hyu and Kia.

"The family is together once more." Hyu whispered to them through tears.

"Wrong, Hyu," an old cranky voice grated out. Tyr looked to its source and found his old great-great uncle YipYip. The old man had seen almost ninety winters before he died, and he was still bitter about not seeing ninety one. The old ones were always difficult. "That girl is a part of the Pretor bloodline now."

Tyr's heart pounded faster. Did he mean Astrid? He flashed a look at Kia, his eyes asking all the questions he needed them to. Astrid had specifically mentioned Kia at one point, but he assumed they had met when Astrid was in _stasi_, healing.

"You mean Astrid?" he asked, but he knew the answer.

"Yes, Tyr. Astrid is one of us now. We don't know how, but she can speak to us freely. Nice girl, though." Hyu said. Tyr dug into his memory for a moment, "I know how she is." he mumbled absentmindedly. He remembered clearly.

In his years of service to Soram, Tyr got sliced, stabbed, clubbed,

broken bones, torn muscles, and even a cracked skull at one point. He'd always healed extraordinarily fast though, and healed cleanly. Never had he gone through any complications with bad stitches or an infected wound or any of that.

So, when Astrid got mauled that night in Meade Hall, Tyr did have that medicine of his which would clean and seal the wound, but for extra measure he had put some of his own blood into it, hoping that it would bestow the same healing powers unto her. The likeness of Astrid to Shaiya was too much for him. His blood had evidently mixed with hers and grown, turning Astrid into a half-blood Keeper. Now that is going to need some heavy explaining when it came to light in the village.

Tyr had deduced that he was in stasi. Astrid had managed to remember the ritual, and change the words to make it appropriate. six days, he figured, and he'd be out of here. Then came the task of facing the village without getting himself killed. Again.

All fifteen of his ancestors that he'd killed on the ship seventeen years ago now hung around him, like a crowd around a newborn baby. They laughed and cried and confessed, but Tyr was back in the good graces of his ancestors, and he would live to fight another day.

XXX

"Holy gods, what happened to this place?" Tuffnut said in awe as they trudged through the ruins of Berk. Most of the village was on its way back to the town now, Milaki having told them that everything was over. Hiccup had ripped the man onto Toothless and flown to the town as fast as they could. Milaki had said that Astrid was still alive, and Hiccup wanted nothing more than to see her and hold her in his arms.

Upon arriving, he had been astounded at the scene before him, less because of destroyed and burned buildings, he'd seen plenty of that during the dragon wars. It was more the unbridled death that unsettled him. He'd never seen so many dead anythings in his life, whether it be dragons, people, fish, birds, anything in one place. The smell threatened to pull everything he'd eaten in the last 24 hours out of his stomach. The other teens had followed as quick as their dragons could carry them, and now hey waded through the ruins. Milaki led them through and in minutes, they were in the center of the market, where a crude lean to had been constructed around a pile of blankets and cloaks.

"Get ready. She isn't very clean." Milaki said as he lifted the cloaks. Hiccup thought he meant that she was horrendously injured. She was covered in blood, but not her own. She lay on top of the corpse of Tyr Pretor, Soram's longsword emerging from his chest. The blood that covered Astrid was Tyr's, not her own. She did have a nasty gash on her right thigh, so most of the blood wasn't hers.

Hiccup shook off his initial shock and set to work.

"Tuff, Ruff, we are going to need a damage assessment. Run through the village and count every building that is livable, meaning four walls and a roof. If there are holes that can be easily boarded up,

those count. I need an inventory of everything useable, meaning blankets, mugs, jars, boar-

"_We get it_, dude. Loosen up." Ruffnut groaned sarcastically. Her and Tuffnut took a side road and disappeared. Hiccup turned to Snotlout and Fishlegs, "Alright, while they do that, I need you two to start clearing away what you can. We'll need the marketplace cleared out before everyone else arrives."

"What makes you think I'm going to lower myself to manual labor?" Snotlout scoffed. Hiccup turned back and smiled, "Well, when all the ladies arrive and see the glistening sweat running off your giant muscles, they'll certainly fall for you."

Snotlout turned and stomped off, "Ok, we'll start over here!" Hiccup grinned as he watched the sometimes far too proud Jorgenson walk off, a muttering Fishlegs in tow.

"A ladies man, eh?" Milaki laughed as they walked off. Hiccup turned back to Astrid and Tyr, "Is this how she was when you left?"

"Exactly. Hasn't moved a muscle." Milaki confirmed. That meant that she has had, even if exhausted, at least six to eight hours of rest. He would have to wake her up. Ducking under the torn canvas of the lean to, he stroked her cheek, feeling how even in the state she was, her skin still felt like the softest velvet to him.

He withdrew his hand quickly when she stirred, "Hiccup?" The voice was ragged, a bit strained, but definitely comforting.

"Hey there, beautiful. Sleep well?" He asked, stifling a chuckle.

"Shut up." Her morning temper hadn't changed. He kissed her on the forehead and then rested his own against it, "It's over, Astrid. The Drakonicus is gone, we're all alive...well, most of us." He gulped reluctantly, not sure if she knew that she was laying on a full pillow of dead Tyr.

"He's alive." She said, smiling down at a glimmering crystal that had been clenched in her palm. Hiccup glanced at the crystal with a blank look. He hadn't a clue what she meant.

"That ritual thing Tyr did to me after cracking my ribs." She said. Nope, still not getting you.

"I did that ritual to Tyr! He's in that _stasi_ place he sent me to!" she exclaimed. Ritual? What the Hel was she talking about?

He dug into his memory and after a minute's reflection, understood what she was saying. She was talking about when he thought that Tyr killed her but her really didn't kill her. Tyr actually had a penchant for doing that particular thing. Pretending to kill someone and not doing it. Bastard.

"So...in a few days.."

"Tyr will come back. I don't know if he'll still carry the curse, but he'll be back alive."

Yet more good news. At the same time, Hiccup wasn't sure how well this would go over with the people. There had been rumor of a criminal trial for Tyr, should he be caught. There had also been talk of execution. He hoped it didn't come to that.

"That's great, Astrid. Lets get you back on your feet though. Let me see that thigh."

XXX

Five days had passed since Hiccup and the others had gotten back to the village. Astrid was back on her feet, albeit with a slight limp, and the village was almost cleaned out and ready to be rebuilt. Meade Hall had become the living location for almost the entire population, apart from those who were working in the town. They tended to sleep in the houses that had been most fixed up first.

Kept a secret from most of the townspeople for now, Tyr had been taken to Astrid's house to recover. Stoick had been unsure of Astrid's story about_ stasi_ and the crystal and coming back to life, but he bought it. The silver haired man had been bathed, by Hiccup, and re clothed in a clean tunic. Now, he lay in her room, on a bank of furs laid there by her and Hiccup. They still slept in her bed, but Astrid wanted Tyr there so that when the crystal finally grew "hot and bothered" as Hiccup had described it, she could punch Tyr back into reality.

"You know, Astrid, this is all because of you." Hiccup said as he sat in their bed, looking over some designs for a stronger framework for homes. She was busy spreading a cleaner cream that the elder had given her on the stitching of her thigh.

"Don't make me out to Freyja in the flesh." was all she said. If he could see her face, he might be concerned about how burning red it was. Hiccup saying something that meant so much to her. Yeah, she was the mighty Astrid who killed the Drakonicus, but she still got off on sweet compliments.

"Don't be stupid." He said. She turned around sharply, his words tweaking her patience, "Excuse me?"

He looked up from the plans, "I said, don't be stupid. You did this. You fought an ancient demon and won. You uncovered Tyr's secrets. You are the reason I kept going. The hope of seeing you live through this is what drove me. What drove you?"

She considered his question, but the answer was easy. She held up her hand, the ring that he'd made sitting proudly upon it, "The hope that I would get anything even close to as beautiful as this," She sauntered forward with a sultry look in her eye and flung her arms around his neck, "And the hope that I can be with a man as perfect as you is what drove me." She finished, her lips mere breathes away from his. The sun was setting outside her window. It was absolutely the most perfect kiss ever. Or would have been.

"Oi! What in the name of Hel is that?" Hiccup shouted, grabbing at his bare chest. Astrid laughed at his crazed frenzy, but cooed cutely at the little red mark on the skin just below his right pectoral. It was the crystal that hung around her neck. It was swinging and

burning white hot, which Astrid believed meant that Tyr was ready.

"Just like him, to ruin such a good moment." Hiccup grumbled. Astrid laughed and took the crystal off her neck, wrapping its leather strap around her knuckles like a boxer. The crystal resting on the large knuckle of her right hand, she slammed it as hard as she could into Tyr's forehead.

A minute passed. Then two. The bruise on Tyr's forehead colored. Astrid held her breath. Three minutes. Then.

"What the fuck, girl!" Tyr screamed, grabbing his forehead. Astrid squealed with delight and jumped on the silver haired man, hugging him tightly. He was back. She knew that Hiccup must be suspicious, of her sudden show of affection, but she didn't much care right then.

"Ast...Astrid...air!" Tyr gasped. She loosened her grip and felt him gulp down air like Gobber gulping mead at a banquet. Hiccup joined in the hug, and the three friends stayed there for a good five minutes, reveling in each other. Tyr was still bitching about his forehead when they went to sleep.

XXX

Two weeks gone from the ending of the D-Day, as they'd begun calling it, and most of the village was rebuilt. The specialty buildings still had to be rebuilt, such as most of the marketplace and the storehouses, but that would come later. Hiccup sat to the right of his father at the head table, listening to the proceedings. This was a banquet that had been planned to commemorate the re-establishment of Berk. Hiccup was tense though; as was his father. Astrid, sitting in the crowd next to her mother and brother was incredibly fidgety. The village, after learning of Tyr's survival, had followed through on their threat: they wanted him to go on trial for his 'crimes'.

So, at this banquet, the tables were all set up in a square, leaving a large open space in the middle. In the middle of that space, surrounded by Stoick's most trusted men, meaning Gobber, Spitelout, Foreman and a lonely guard named Nordo, sat Tyr. Now, if Tyr had been sitting there of his own free will, it would have been fine. No, some of the older men had demanded that he be chained up, to prevent any retaliation. Tyr had assured Hiccup, Astrid and most of all Stoick that he would do no such thing, no matter his fate.

"So, upon a village vote, we stand here vigilant on the trial of Tyr Pretor, accused of attempted mass-murder and treason. Both counts are punishable by death and only death." Stoick said. His voice was heavy. He didn't want to do this; Tyr had more than earned his stay in the chiefs eyes.

The people murmured their agreement. Hiccup had been blindingly furious when he learned that they still wanted to go through with the stupid trial.

"With your permission, Stoick, we'd open discussion to the village." the Elder said in her creaky voice from the left of the Chief. He nodded, and surprisingly, at first nobody really spoke in more than

hushed tones meant for neighbors. Then the people started to get brave. Wild accusations of rape and the slaughter of children rained down on Tyr from all sides. Finally, after an agonizing ten minutes of verbal abuse, the yelling stopped. Tyr hadn't flinched.

"Stoick, as spokesman for the people, I call for a village vote on the fate of this..._demon_. Yes! You all heard me! This man is a demon. His flesh and bones lay prison for something far more terrible, and if we house him here, that demon will destroy us, as it almost had once before. He is not a viking of this island! He is not family to anyone here! You saw how easily this man deceived you! How he played a gods game of life and death with your families! Your children! He drugged hundreds of dragons and kept them hidden! Imagine what he could do to us! Imagine the depth of his betrayal! I call for the ultimate punishment! The Bloody Eagle!" shouted a fiery Mildew. Always riling up the people using their emotions.

The Hall got caught up in the crescendo of chants and cheers, "Bloody! Bloody! Bloody! Eagle! Eagle! Eagle!" The Bloody Eagle was the worst form of punishment a human could go through. Tyr would be sliced open along his spine, have his ribs broken away and his lungs pulled out to the sides of his body, looking like the blood soaked wings of an eagle.

He rose, looking around. Astrid sat stock still, her eyes watering. If the village decided, there was no going back.

A wet eyed Stoick called for silence, "If there are no more words to be said, let it be seen that the punishment of the Bloody Eagle be carried out on Tyr Pretor, by order of the people." The stone gavel in his hand began to fall to the table.

It was slow motion. Astrid, crying full on now, ran over and fell onto Tyr, hugging him, fighting desperately against Gobber and Spitelout who were trying to pull her away. Milaki wrestled with Foreman and Nordo, who had him solidly pinned to the stone floor. Old Marcais didn't spring to action, but Hiccup could see the tears rolling down his face. The gavel fell slowly, the room chaotic. Tyr was going to die because these buffoons follow their emotions blindly. Odin help him.

Hiccup walked over and caught his fathers arm, stopping the gavel mere inches from the stone pedestal it would have come down upon. The noise in the room stopped and every eye in the village was on Hiccup. The boy took the gavel from his father, "Step aside." He said, drawing a shocked eye from Stoick. To Hiccups relief, Stoick bowed his head and stepped back, retiring to the seat that was Hiccups a moment before.

Looking out on the Hall, at the faces of the people that he loved, at the faces of those he didn't love, at some faces that he could barely even give a name to, Hiccup pondered his speech.

"Now, you will _all_, wait just a fucking Thor blessed minute!" he screamed, crashing the gavel down on the wood of the table, splitting it in half, splinters flying everywhere. The Hall grew silent, for good reason. Hiccup had never, ever cursed in public like that, nor had he ever _smashed_ an oak table in two. The silence was unbroken, except for the sounds of Astrid quietly sobbing. Hiccup walked into the square and looked Tyr in the eye, "May I?" He asked.

"Why do you ask the de-"

"Shut up, Mildew!" Hiccup yelled. Tyr nodded, and so Hiccup went on his off the cuff tirade.

"Yes, people of Berk, Tyr Pretor does carry a demon inside him. Make no mistake, that is the truth and we'd all be fools not to realize it. His demon is terrible, powerful, unstoppable. And yet, we stopped it. The demon destroyed this village, you can be sure of that, but you inhabitants still survive." He scanned the crowd, eyes planting only briefly on every person. His pacing gave him a rhythm

"Yes, people of Berk, Tyr Pretor did drug hundreds of dragons and play us for fools. He manipulated us with skill as much of that of Loki." He paused, letting his words settle into the minds of his audience.

"Yes, people of Berk, Tyr Pretor could do it all again without a bead of sweat on his brow or an ache in his bones. But." This pause was longer, making sure that every person was dripping, salivating on his last words.

"Yes, people of Berk, Tyr Pretor saved your lives. All of our lives. The bodies we found here were not those of Berk-born vikings, but those of evil men from a far sea. Tyr Pretor manipulated us all for fools, to save us. Tyr Pretor drugged hundreds of dragons, to save them. Tyr Pretor used his demon, to save the island of Berk. Now, it is in your hands to save Tyr Pretor. Will you, or will you not? Does the honor of vikings plunge us to the same despicable level as that of the men who sought to kill us? Or does it bring us great lives, great legends to carry all the way to Valhalla and beyond? I ask you now, will you save, or will you not?"

He strode back up to stand next to his father, who had the largest beam of pride glowing on his face. Hiccup had enough goosebumps to last him a hundred winters. He took a giant gamble with that speech. He would either win, or be executed next to Tyr.

The Hall lay in silence. The people didn't break their stare at the young Hiccup, who stood in front of them with a purpose. Not even mumblings sounded through the crowd, only silence. Somebody stood up, and snapping his eyes to them, Hiccup found the patriarch of the Thorston family, an old man named Gutrot, "Live." he croaked. The rest of the Thorston clan stood slowly, "Live." They all said in unison.

Next, the Jorgenson's, "Honor to him!" They yelled out. Foreman stood next, getting off Milaki, "Good dockworkers are in short supply. Live!"

The Ingerman's, Fishlegs, his two brothers and three sisters and their parents rose in unison, "A man of integrity, he is. Live!"

Next, Ingrid Hofferson stood, "He saved my daughters life, and she saved his. It's my turn. I vote for life."

"E's a bloody good bloke." Gobber said. The others began to follow suit, the entire village now calling for Tyr to live on. Hiccup

swallowed a huge gulp of air. He'd been holding his breath the whole time. Stoick rumbled out for silence as the Elder stood, leaning on her staff, "A demon inside, maybe. Outside, a man of honor and dignity." That was it. The village cheered and threw their helmets, slammed mugs together and sat down at the huge tables while Gobber unlocked Tyr's chains.

The man rubbed his wrists and bowed his head to Hiccup.

"Wait!" He yelled out to the Hall. Everyone stopped, intent on seeing what the fuss was now. Tyr, seeing that he had everyone's attention, looked over at Astrid, "You know, Astrid, I'm seeing some interesting hardware on that hand of yours."

Hiccup froze. The slimy bastard. He'd called out Hiccup's wedding ring. It was a chance for Hiccup to announce it, after his hard won speech. Silently, Hiccup resolved to thank Tyr later for it. The people began muttering as they saw that ring, but Hiccup ignored them. He beckoned Astrid up to the front of the Hall, "Um...I'd like to say...uh...um," _Oh, the gods hate me!_ He thought furiously. Where the Hel was that confidence that was here two seconds ago?

"Astrid and I want to get married." He blurted out as solidly as he could. Hiccup's eyes fell on Ingrid who, albeit red as a turnip, had a grin from ear to ear. The people sat for a moment, processing the words, then exploded with joy. Blessings came down on them from every table, and vows to drink an extra keg for them came in from every person in the Hall. Hiccup pulled Astrid into his arms as they watched the village celebrate.

The doors of the Hall, not yet fully repaired, hung wide open and the dreary sky split apart and granted passage to the warm sun as Freyja smiled down on the couple. The rays of light illuminated the reborn town of Berk and bore lovely heat onto Hiccup's face.

Hiccup kissed Astrid tenderly and rested his forehead against hers, "So much for betrayal." She laughed and returned his kiss. After weeks of cold times and cold company, it was finally warm on Berk.

* * *

><p>And that is the conclusion to the Depth of Betrayal! I hope those of you who make it here sincerely enjoyed it. As I have said before, I will be doing a one-shot series based off the world of Depth, and I'll open the floor to ideas! Please, leave me requests and anything you think might make a good one shot! Also, ideas for a title would help! The first chapter of that will definitely appear by this Saturday, the 9th of February 2013!<p>

End
file.